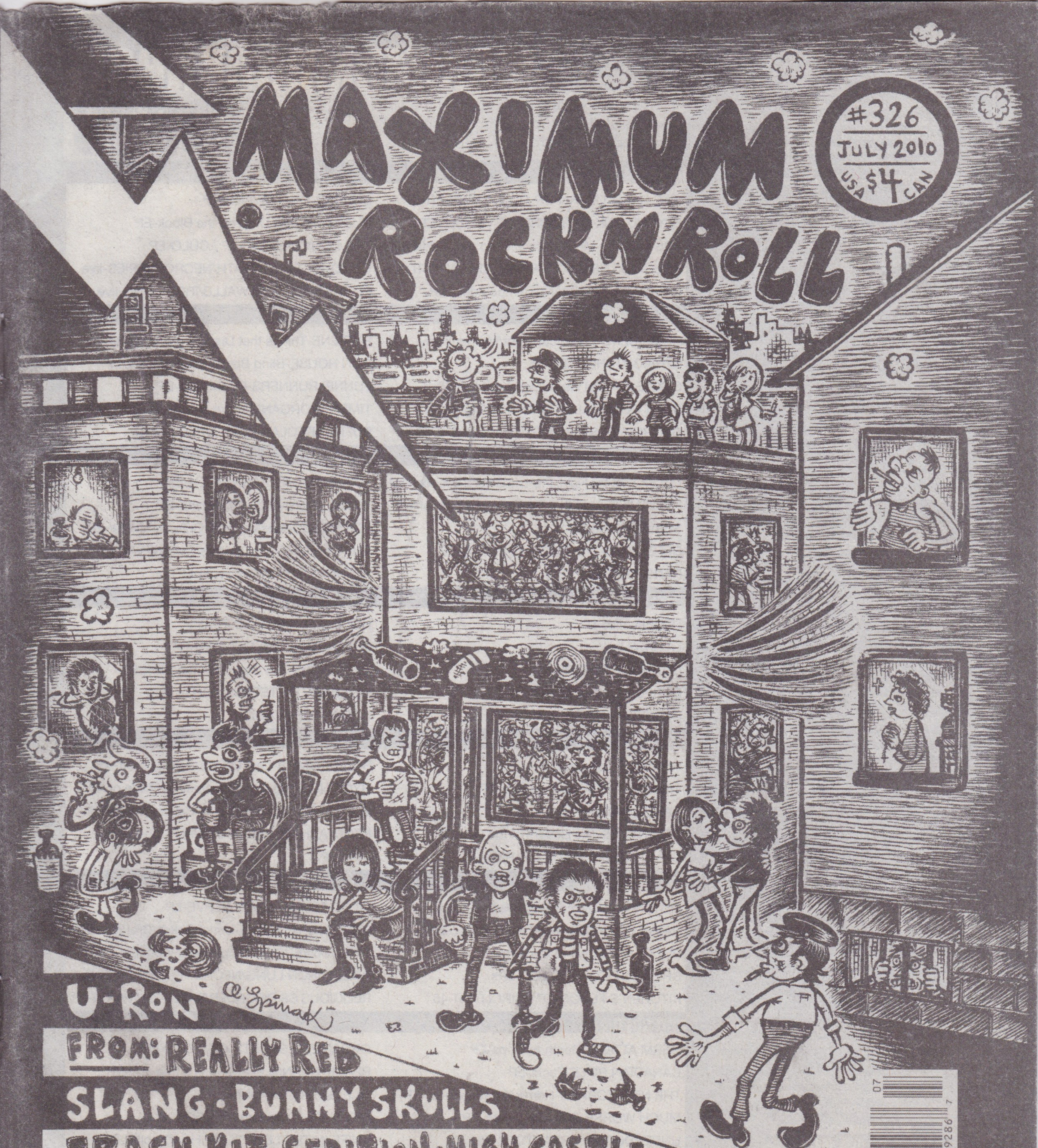
# MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

#326
JULY 2010
USA $4 CAN



U-RON
FROM: REALLY RED
SLANG • BUNNY SKULLS
TRASH KIT • SEDITION • HIGH CASTLE
MARCEL DUCHAMP • STREET EATERS
CIRCLE PIT • MEHKAGO NT • RANDOM CONFLICT

# MAXIMUMROCKNROLL TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

## MARIAM BASTANI

VILE GASH-Life-Rot-EP / COUGHING FIT-EP
BEYOND PINK-LP / LAURENCE WASSER-EP
LOS MONJO-Mexicanos al Grito de Mierda-EP
RELIGIOUS SS DISORDER/SKELETON PARTY-LP
RATAS DEL VATICANO-Tiempos de...-LP
DURESS-EP / LIBYANS-EP
CULTURE KIDS-Drop off the Block-EP
THE CONVERSIONS-LP / CÜLO-EP
CONQUEST FOR DEATH/NECRO HIPPIES-live
PLF/NERVESKADE/WALLS/IRON LUNG-live

## BRACE BELDEN

HOME BLITZ-Prepetual Night/Murder in my...-45
STRAIGHTSHOOTER-45
CIRCLE PIT-Total Waste/Everybody Left-45
SHITTY LIMITS-Last Orders/Selling Point-45
GEORGIANA STARLINGTON/WILD CHOIR-EP
HYGIENE-Things that Dreams are Made of-45
RON HOUSE-Blind Boy in the Backseat-LP
TUNNELRUNNERS-Plasticland-EP
TIMMY'S ORGANISM-I'm on a Hunt-EP
PUFFY AREOLAS-In the Army 1981-LP

## TIM BROOKS

DOOM-Lost the Fight: Pro-Life Control Sessions-LP
HYGIENE-Things that Dreams are Made of-45
SURVET SKINS-LP
DEFEKTORS-The Bottom of the City-LP
RANGE RATS-LP
LÖGNHALSMOTTAGNINGEN-EP
TUNNELRUNNERS-Plasticland-EP
LOS MONJO-Mexicanos al Grito de Mierda-EP
SHITTY LIMITS-Last Orders/Selling Point-45
ALEHAMMER/TYRANT-split-LP

## ROBERT COLLINS

UTOPIA-Niee-LP
LA URSS-live
LAURENCE WASSER-EP
DURESS-Burden of Truth-EP
USELESS CHILDREN-live
HOLY SHIT-K.B.D.O.O.P-10"
BEYOND PINK-The New Black-LP
DEFEKTORS-The Bottom of the City-LP
CHILDREN OF TECHNOLOGY-LP
CROW-Bloody Tear-LP

## SEAN "DOUGIE" DOUGAN

REDSKINS-Epilogue-CD
WHATEVER BRAINS-Love Taps-EP
RANGE RATS-LP
DEFEKTORS-The Bottom of the City-LP
GOVERNMENT ISSUE-Joy Ride-LP
SHITTY LIMITS-Last Orders/Selling Point-45
HYGIENE-Things that Dreams are Made of-45
BURNING YELLOWS-Urinal Cakes/Drought-45
FROM ASHES RISE-Live Hell-LP
DMV-EP

## LAYLA GIBBON

LIBYANS-Paralyzed/Keep Waiting-EP
RATAS DEL VATICANO-Tiempos de...-LP
PUFFY AREOLAS-In the Army 1981-LP
BRILLIANT COLORS-both EPs
KITCHEN'S FLOOR-EP / CIRCLE PIT-45
VILE GASH-EP / RAW NERVE-LP
BURNING YELLOWS-Urinal Cakes/Drought-45
THE CONVERSIONS-Spineless Wonders-LP
WALLS/IRON LUNG/NECRO HIPPIES/LIVID-live
RELIGIOUS SS DISORDER/SKELETON PARTY-LP

## BOB GOLDIE

GERM ATTACK-Death to Cops-EP
CANADIAN RIFLE-Facts-EP
THE NEW YORKER-Home is Where the...-EP
MUCH WORSE-Proper Execute-EP
UNDERDOG-EP / REACTORS-45
ORGANIZED SPORTS-G.U.I.D.O.-EP
BLACK TRIANGLES-Dead in a Pile of...-EP
VILE GASH-Life-Rot-EP
MESS FOLK-Modern Man-EP
KNIFE IN THE LEG/FIX MY HEAD-split-LP

## KENNY KAOS

THROWAWAYS/SPASTIC PANTHERS-split-EP
JOHNNY THROTTLE-Sick of Myself/Job in...-45
STICKS N STONES-Red Light/Time Change-45
MISSING MONUMENTS-Black Rainbow-45
WHITE WIRES-Pogo 'Til I Puke Tonight-45
CHIN CHIN-Sound of the Westway-LP
STEVE ADAMYK-Speed It Up/2010-45
THE BRIMSTONES-Shut Me Down-EP
TIMMY'S ORGANISM-I'm on a Hunt-EP
APACHE-Finger Banger-video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See page 4 for pricing and other info.


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**MAXIMUMROCKNROLL**
**PO BOX 460760**
**SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94146-0760**

Phone (415) 923-9814
**www.maximumrocknroll.com**
**mrr@maximumrocknroll.com**

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# TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl, CD-only, or demo releases to the address on the previous page

## CAROLYN KEDDY

- TY SEGALL-Melted-CD / LIMINALS-I'm Dead-EP
- PAUL CARY-Ghost of a Man-LP
- TIMMY'S ORGANISM-I'm on a Hunt-EP
- BRILLIANT COLORS-both EPs
- PUFFY AREOLAS-In the Army 1981-LP
- RATAS DEL VATICANO-Tiempos de...-LP
- CULTURE KIDS-Drop Off the Block-EP
- CHIN CHIN-LP / TUTU AND THE PIRATES-LP
- TUNNELRUNNERS-Plasticland-EP
- OIL CITY CONFIDENTIAL-film

## RAY LUJAN

- CHIN CHIN-Sound of the Westway-LP
- LEATHERFACE-The Stormy Petrel-LP
- REDSKINS-CD / THE OVER ATTACKS-CD
- FRESH & ONLYS-Vanishing Cream-EP
- NEW CREASES-About Last Night-EP
- IMMATERIAL-Betty-EP
- BUNNY'S A SWINE-Nothing Bad-CD
- DOOMHAWK-LP / RVIVR-LP
- JOHNNY THROTTLE-Sick of Myself/Job in...-45
- THE NON BELIEVERS-CD/X (Australia)-live

## MARK MURRMANN

- TIMMY'S ORGANISM-I'm on a Hunt-EP
- REACTORS-I Want Sex/Seduction Center-45
- RATAS DEL VATICANO-Tiempos de...-LP
- TUNNELRUNNERS-Plasticland-EP
- STICKS N STONES-Red Light/Time Change-45
- BED WETTING BAD BOYS-Best/Worst...-EP
- MOJOMATICS-Love Wild Fever-45
- RELIGIOUS SS DISORDER/SKELETON PARTY-LP
- HAUNTED GEORGE-American Crow-LP
- LOS MONJO-Mexicanos al Grito de Mierda-EP

## BRUCE ROEHRS

"Everywhere working class men and women continue their struggle..."
RIP Bruce Roehrs 1950-2010

## KEN SANDERSON

- KNUSTE RUTER-Gjennon Veggene-LP
- PARLAMENTARISK SODOMI-Regnskog...-EP
- MOUTH SEWN SHUT-2009-LP
- UTOPIA-Niee-LP
- ARTIC FLOWERS-live
- KNIFE IN THE LEG/FIX MY HEAD-LP
- KRIMTÄNK/SUB ALERT-split-EP
- DURESS-EP / GERM ATTACK-LP
- CEREMONY-EP / DEAD FRIENDS-12"
- BEYOND PINK-The New Black-LP

## FRED SCHRUNK

- RVIVR-Rain Down-LP
- THE CONVERSIONS-Spineless Wonders-LP
- LIBYANS-Paralyzed/Keep Waiting-EP
- 2009-The Future is Soon-LP
- CHIN CHIN-Sound of the Westway-LP
- RATAS DEL VATICANO-Tiempos de...-LP
- BEYOND PINK-The New Black-LP
- FAT BEAVERS-Still Dont Know What to Do-LP
- UTOPIA-Niee-LP
- REACTORS-I Want Sex/Seduction Center-45

## MARTIN SORRONDEGUY

- VILE GASH-Life-Rot-EP
- ORGANIZED SPORTS-G.U.I.D.O.-EP
- CULTURE KIDS-Drop Off the Block-EP
- DURESS-Burden of Truth-EP
- LOS MONJO-Mexicanos al Grito de Mierda-EP
- LIBYANS-Paralyzed/Keep Waiting-EP
- HOLY SHIT-K.B.D.O.O.P-10"
- RAW NERVE-LP
- RATAS DEL VATICANO-Tiempos de...-LP
- NERVESKADE-live

## ZINE TOP TEN

- *Antipatia #6, #7, #8*
- *Dealin' With It #3 / Evil Minded #5*
- *Rad Party*
- *Last Breath #6*
- *More Noize #4*
- *Mermadia Bomb # 42 / Arty Party*
- *Social Sterility #1*
- *Plastic Bomb #70*
- *Accept the Darkness #2*
- *Toinen Vaihtoehto #224, #225*


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## CONTRIBUTORS

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# A WHOLE CRAPLOAD OF MRR BACK ISSUES...

**#179/April '98.** Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

**#180/May '98.** Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

**#181/June '98.** Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

**#186/Nov '98.** Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

**#187/Dec '98.** Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

**#188/Jan '99.** Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

**#189/Feb '99.** Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

**#190/Mar '99.** John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

**#191/April '99.** Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

**#195/Aug '99.** Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

**#197/Oct '99.** Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

**#208/Sept '00.** Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

**#209/Oct '00.** Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

**#214/Mar '01.** Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

**#218/July '01.** Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

**#221/Oct '01.** The G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

**#223/Dec '01.** "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

**#225/Feb '02.** Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

**#227/Apr '02.** Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

**#229/June '02.** Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

**#230/July '02.** Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

**#233/Oct '02.** "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

**#234/Nov '02.** Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

**#236/Jan '03.** Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

**#238/Mar '03.** World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

**#239/Apr '03.** Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

**#240/May '03.** I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

**#241/June '03.** Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

**#242/July '03.** Pensacola & San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine , Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

**#243/Aug '03.** "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

**#244/Sept '03.** None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

**#245/Oct '03.** No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

**#246/Nov '03.** Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

**#247/Dec '03.** DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

**#249/Feb '04.** From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

**#250/Mar '04.** Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

**#251/April '04.** The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl,Vrah.

**#253/June '04.** Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

**#254/July '04.** No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

**#255/Aug '04.** "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue, Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

**#256/Sep '04.** Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

**#257/Oct '04** The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, Boss Martians, Reactionary 3, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

**#258/Nov '04.** Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

**#259/Dec '04.** Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

**#260/Jan '05.** Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

**#261/Feb '05.** Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

**#262/March '05.** Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scenes.

**#263/April '05.** All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

**#264/May '05.** Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

**#265/June '05.** Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

**#266/July '05.** The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

**#267/August '05.** Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech and New Zealand scene reports.

**#268/September'05.** Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

**#269/October '05.** Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

**#270/November '05.** Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

**#271/December '05.** Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records, Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

**#272/January '06.** Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine, Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

**#273/February '06.** Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

**#274/March '06.** Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

**#275/April '06.** History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

**#276/May '06.** "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part One), History of ABC No Rio (Part Two), Vitamin X Asian Pacific tour diary, Soviet Valves Suburban Death Machine, Frustrations, George Hurchalla, Scene reports: Czech Republic and Greece.

**#277/June '06.** "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part Two), Imperial Leather, Boom Boom Kid, Vitamin X Asian Pacific Tour (part two), "How to Make It Big!" by the Phantom Surfers, Magrudergrind, Poland.

**#278/July '06.** Billy Childish, Death Token, The First Step, Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press, Headache City, Deconditioned, Under Pressure, Insuiciety, Instigators, Malaysia Scene, Bay Area Scene Pics.

**#279/August '06.** Mika Miko, The Fall, Cardiac Arrest, Digger & the Pussycats, Massmord, Insect Warfare, The Astronauts, Canary Islands Photo Spread, Four Slicks, The Fallout, PAWNS, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, & Umeå, Sweden scenes.

**#280/September '06.** Hjerte Stop, Grupo Sub-1, Desperate Bicycles, Bill Daniel interview and photo spread, APF Brigade, Disconvenience, Southkore Fest photo spread, Rosenbombs, Up the Voltage, Euro photo spread, Svartenbrandt, Asheville, NC & world wide punk scene reports.

**#281/October '06.** Out With a Bang, Redd Kross, Derek Lyn Plastic, We March, Alan Milman, Rat Traps, Blood Robots, The Scarred, Gilbert Switzer, Japan & US photo spreads, Sweden & UK scene reports.

**#282/November '06.** The Feelers, PESD, Toxic Ephex, Auktion, Bruise Violet, *Trust* fanzine, The Homosexuals, The Effigies, Rat City Riot, New York City & North Carolina scene reports.

**#283/December '06.** Jay Reatard interview & photos, Crimes Against Humanity Records, A Touch of Hysteria, Doris Fanzine, Kvoteringen, '90s Punk Scumpit Part II, Black Chrome, The Dirty Water Club, photos, Tokyo scene report.

**#284/January '07.** Margaret Thrasher, 924 Gilman at 20 Years, Order of the White Rose, Regress, Subhumans (UK) Part One, Blank Its, Condenada, Genetic Control, photos, Syracuse & San Diego scene reports.

**#285/February '07.** Randy "Biscuit" Turner of the Big Boys & the early Texas punk scene, Lemuria, Ruin, Subhumans (UK) Part Two, The Blinds, Tranzistors, ANS, Riot This, La Piovra, Bay Area scene pics, Barcelona, Spain scene report.

**#286/March '07.** Best of 2006, Smartut Kahol Lavan, Electric Kisses, Holy Shit!, Lost Cherrees Pt 1, Go!, Kraljevo, Serbia, and Bakersfield, CA scene reports.

**#287/April '07.** Alicja Trout, Keith Rosson (*Avow* zine), Crap Corps, The Vicious, Scum System Kill, Lost Cherrees Pt 2, Restless Youth, SBV, Australia, Kyiv, Ukraine, and Pittsburgh, PA scene reports.

**#288/May '07.** Clockcleaner, Pisschrist, The Rats (Sweden), Conflict (US), The Viletones, Violent Tumor, Czech Republic and East Texas scene reports.

**#289/June '07.** Ultimo Resorte, Kursk, Masstrauma, Social Circkle, Final Approach, Post Punk Kitchen, Southern Death Cult, Portland Drummers, Timisoara, Copenhagen, and Pampanga scene reports.

**#290/July '07.** Stormcrow, Merkit, Solid Decline, Monster Squad, Sex Vid, Vivisick, Warkrime, Top Ten, *We're Gonna Fight* zine, White Cross, Berlin scene report.

**#291/August '07.** *MRR* 25th Anniversary Issue, Martin Sprouse, Tim Yohannon, No Slogan, Ruidosa Inmundicia, Chinese Telephones, Vaseline Children, Anti-System, Dave Roche, 6-page retrospective photo-spread, Kawakami/ Disclose obituary, Brazil scene report.

**#292/September '07.** New Bloods, Chronic Seizure, Outraged, Geriatric Unit, Active Distribution, Gruk, The Mods, No Defences, The Fakes, Trashies Tour Report, Mexico scene report.

**#293/October '07.** Punk and Immigration Theme issue w/ interviews, articles, and stories, Anti-You, Loser Life, Political Asylum, Olympia scene report.

**#294/November '07.** The Hipshakes, Neverending Party, Punk & Immigration article, Finally Punk, La Lucha Para La Justicia en Guatemala, Leftover Crack, AOA.

**#295/December '07.** Surrender, What If Gods Lie?, The Crawlers, 2:20, The Joneses, Libertario Magazine, Bad Samaritans, Shrapnel, Untermensch.

**#296/January '08.** Hellshock, Mario Panciera, Anathema, The System, Eddy Current Suppression Ring, The Voids, Cinecyde, Kyklooppien Sukupuutto, Punch In The Face, BSA.

**#297/February '08.** Marie Kanger-Born, Thrillhouse Records, Contaminators, Oi Polloi, Obstruction, I Walk the Line, Utopia

**#298/March '08.** Best of 2007, Autistic Youth, White Lung, Karma Sutra, Clusterfuck, Sharon Cheslow, Slaughter of the Innocent.

**#299/April '08.** Government Warning, Age, Off With Their Heads, Guided Cradle, Go It Alone, Fy Fan, Daily Void, Hungarian Scene history.

**#300/May '08.** NorCal Punk Special: Fix My Head, Black Rainbow, Tank Crimes, Young Offenders, Church Police, Traditional Fools, Six Weeks/Short Fast & Loud, Ecoli.

**#301/June '08.** Underground Railroad to Candyland, Straightjacket Nation, Red Dons, Spectres, Dean Dirg, Kola, Los Violadores, the Sears, Tentacles of Destruction, Antibodies, Head on Collision.

**#302/July '08.** Giuda, Wasted Time, Reality, Sin Orden, Teenage Head, Antidote, La Urss, Canadian Rifle, Seasick, Israel & Japan scenes.

**#303/August '08.** Double Negative, Burnt Cross, Masapunk, Chicago Clitfest, Intifada, Nuclear Death Terror, Raw Power, Unlovables, Waste, Chaos In Tejas photospread, Houston and Grand Rapids scene reports.

**#304/September '08.** Raymond Pettibon, John Stabb of Government Issue, Cola Freaks, Measure [sa], The Press, XYX, Simply Saucer, Kulturkampf, Andy T, FPO, and Columbia scene report.

**#305/October '08.** Pierced Arrows, Bum Kon, Deep Sleep, Diente Perro, IRA, Legion of Parasites, Reality Control, Riot City Records, Stations, Test Patterns.

**#306/November '08.** Brain Handle, Assassins, Diodes (pt. 1), 97 Shiki, Black Dove, No Bunny, Shellshag, Sista Sekunden, Vivian Girls, Animals And Men.

**#308/January '09.** Punks & Film Special with Target Video, Whatever Happened To Susan Jane, Cleveland's Screaming, Mondo Vision, After the Salad Days, You Weren't There, Botinada, Taqwacores, and more.

**#309/February '09.** Ooga Boogas,Mind Eraser, Cococoma, Extortion, Boyracer, Nixe, Mr. California, Deathcage, Squalora, Maniax, Null and Void, Think Fast.

**#310/March '09.** 2008 Year-end Top Tens, Health Issue Special–Interviews with Mikey Mind, Chris Colohan and Craig Lewis, plus tons of articles.

**#311/April '09.** Print Media special with Erick Lyle (Scam zine), Shit-Fi, Z-Gun, Terminal Boredom, Tales Of Blarg, John Holmstrom (Punk magazine), History of skate zines, Punk flyer art, and a dozen one-page fanzines.

**#312/May '09.** Criminal Damage, Never Healed, Masonics, Screaming Females, Germ Attak, Petticoats, Condominium, Passion Killers, Pioggia Nera, & the second part of the health issue.

**#313/June '09.** Cult Ritual, Acid Reflux, NN, Herds, Hunx and His Punx, Grass Widow, Project Hopeless, Defect Defect, Tom's Midnight Garden, Existers and scene reports from Sydney and Boston.

**#314/July '09.** Libyans, Coke Bust, Strange Boys, Turboslut, Vogue, Smart Cops, Zyanose, Dennis Dread, a History of Squatting in Italy, Tornonto Scene Report.

**#315/August '09.** Zero Boys, Skin Like Iron, Punch, The Black and Whites, Insomnio, Resist, Blank Dogs, Etacarinae, Come On, London and Brest scene reports.

**#316/September '09.** Amebix, Born/Dead, Divisions, Meatlocker, Something Fierce, Mutating Meltdown,Altercado, Anal Warnead, Nick Toczec, Cowley Club, Albany Scene Report.

**#317/October '09.** Queer issue, with Nastyfacts, Gary Floyd, Limp Wrist, Jos Seein' Red, GB Jones, Younger Lovers, Vaginal Davis, Josh Ploeg, Teu Pai Já Sabe?, Schwarzer Kanal, Bromance, Extra Tongue, and more.

**#318/November '09.** Destino Final, Ratas Del Vaticano, Hex Dispensers, John Joseph/Cro-Mags, Explode Into Colors, Ratos De Porao, Stupids, Antidotum/Czosnek Tour Diary, Disco Assault, Fuera De Linea

**#319/December '09.** The Fix, Slices, Nodzzz, Brilliant Colors, Positive Noise, Gun Outfit, Pink Reason, Scrotum Poles, Gandhi's Cookbook, Goner Fest Photospread, Punk On Kuollut, Eläköön Hardcore: A Personal History of Finnish Hardcore

**#320/January '10.** MRR Top Ten of the Decade, D-Clone, Broken Water, Complications, Control, Ian Glasper (*The Day the Country Died/Burning Britain*)

**#321/February '10.** Photo Issue, SOLD OUT!!! Sorry...

**#322/March '10.** MRR Review Staff's 2009 Top Tens, Japanese artist Sugi, Death, Dry-Roy, Druid Perfume, Kim Phuc, Defensa Absoluta

**#323/April '10.** The Spits, Face the Rail, Battletorn, Scatha, Dadfag, Attentat Sonore, Partibrejkers, Mob Rules, Last Pogo, John Paull Williams from Really Red, Chuck Warner.

**#324/May '10.** Bruce Roehrs memorial,, Kleenex/Liliput, Necro Hippies, Isterismo, RVIVR, Iceage, Tubers, Rot Shit, Beefeater, Cairo IL.

**#325/June '10.** X (Australia), Daylight Robbery, Ty Segall, Morne, Nü Sensae, Pollution, Th' Inbred, Bad Sports, Wankys, Rakosi, Lotus Fucker

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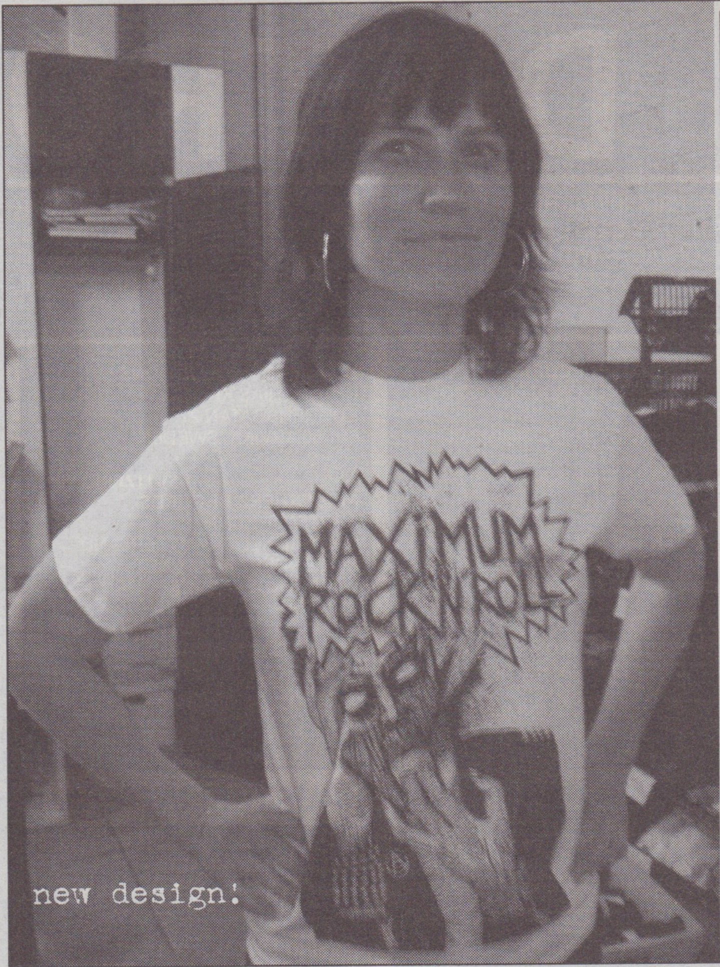

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Maximum Rocknroll is proud to announce the re-release of the seminal Welcome to 1984 compilation LP on the 25th anniversary of its original release. Welcome to 1984 was one of the very first and perhaps best compilations to document the first wave of international hardcore. This LP features legendary bands from all over the globe including Terveet Kädet (Finland), BGK (Netherlands), The Stalin (Japan), Olho Seco (Brazil), Raw Power (Italy), Rattus (Finland), RIP (Spain), and many more. 23 bands in all, from 17 different countries!

Welcome to 1984 has been out of print on vinyl for more than 20 years. MRR is very excited to unleash it on the world once again. We are offering a limited, colored-vinyl edition available only through Maximum Rocknroll.

"This LP covers the scene more as it 'should be' more political with a spirit of independence and resistance in every cut." Al Flipside, from Flipside 43, 1984

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# LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed. Letters may be edited.

*Dear MRR—*

After reading Osa Atoe's article I felt inclined to write. As an older punk and a punk of color I too found funny that *Afro-Punk* didn't do for Black kids what the Riot Girl movement did to empower young women. No, we don't seem to have our own DIY movement (yet), but we already are a part of the larger DIY movement. There are actually more Black kids in the scene now, and we've always been here since the beginning. It's not about quantity, but quality. But outside of that, we in LA have had some killer shows!!! Recently at a house in Long Beach I was fortunate enough to witness a set for Ls Voz (killer set, killer 7"!!!! Pick it up now!!!) Atakke de Nervios (never seen these guys before, but glad I did! Brutal!) and a chaotic set from Spain's La Urss (really great band, unique vocals!!) It was one of the best shows I had seen in a while!!!!!

Cheers,

—Sam

*Dear MRR—*

As an avid reader of your publication, I love to read about and discover active and nonactive punk bands. That being said, one thing I would like to see is some more coverage of current DC hardcore. Everyone already knows about Minor Threat, Bad Brains, Dag Nasty, Scream, Striking Distance etc., but no one knows essentially what happened to the scene that is such a significant influence on hardcore punk music. I am a usual attendee of DC punk shows, and from exposure, I know that there are ponderous amounts of bands to look into or simply mention. I have seen acts such as Coke Bust and Deathrats mentioned in the zine, but that is only a sliver of the DC scene. There are certainly a lot of newer bands that also deserve recognition. Here is a list of bands that should be checked out: Broken Bodies, Troops of Tomorrow, Cold and Come of Age, Rations, and Give. Thanks for taking the time to read this email and I hope you take my suggestion into consideration!

—Carolyn

*Hey Carolyn—*

*All of the content of the magazine you are currently holding is sent in by our readers! That means people like you write scene reports, interview bands they like and send it in to the magazine for potential publication. If there is something you think we are lacking, submit it! Try and ask bands questions that you would find interesting to read, not just what you think interview questions should be. Conversations are more interesting than Q and A sessions... We need photos of the bands, places and people you are writing about, if they are digital they need to be 300dpi so as not to be pixelated. Apparently there has been a Sick Fix interview in the works for the past two years. I have no idea why it is taking so long-maybe ask 'em?*

—Layla

*Hey MRR—*

I spent time in Cairo, IL when I was studying at SIU in nearby Carbondale (where my brother-in-law drummed for Nitro Jr.), so I was psyched to see both the detailed Carbondale scene report on-line and the revealing interview about the punk rock coffee shop/record label that chose change instead of humdrum, easy-access, liberal college town continuity. Right across the river in Kentucky used to be a small punk community, and over to the west in Cape Girardeau, MO too, where I bought a tape by the Plugz at a tiny indie record shop in 1995!

I both enjoyed the denunciatory letters to the editors last month because: people are actually reading and responding. And I really enjoyed the editor's response even more because they looked incisively at many of the mediating factors, like class, color, and gender, that shape both our political stances, and our assumptions and misunderstandings, about media as a tool of discourse. That was finely executed. I always tell people that punk rock was my education, my real high school, and you proved that more than music, and more than one-dimensional thinking, still matter at the mag. If the mag is to continue espousing a homegrown and decentralized DIY democratic ethos, a participatory base, then we have to learn to understand, but not necessarily agree with, the significance of what's being revealed by writers and bands.

—David

*Hey MRR—*

I want to say I really didn't like George Tabb's column in last issue (#323). I've been thinking about it for some days. It's disgusting and I don't get these macho jokes. I guess it's not your fault but I don't understand this kind of thing being published in a punk mag. That's not open minded, it's like "don't give a shit about anything", and it's not funny anyways. Sorry, I feel I don't really know how to express my thoughts in English very well but needed to write.

I appreciate your work.

Take care! Salut.

—Hèctor

*Dear MRR—*

Over the past couple of issues I've noticed various comments about activism. Actually, this has been a hot topic for the past couple of years, especially with the Obama election. One ideal is that punks who are against activism for themselves are jaded and have given up on their old ideas. You know, "sell-outs" and whatnot. I used to believe this to a degree. I'm only going to speak for myself, and this has not been my experience at all.

When I was a youngun I did my share of "activist" type activities. Over time it started to feel really futile. I don't think my signs or chants made any difference. In fact it often irritated people. I also don't believe that I have the right to try to force my opinion down anyone's throat, just as I can't stand when people have preached to me. Now not all activists do that, but today I've come to the realization that I can't change anyone besides myself. I'm not saying to put up with bullshit, I just don't feel the need to convince people to see it "my way." Secondly, I didn't feel like people were listening to me. Probably 'cause they weren't. A friend of mine (a punk teacher) really made me turn my head when he said that no one will listen to you if you look like a freak. I'm seeing how true his words are.

Activism seemed like a lot of preaching to the choir, which I don't feel is useful for me today. (In fact, as I said, I don't believe that I have the right to preach to anyone). It felt like a lot of people agreeing and nodding with each other, often individuals that were incredibly far removed from the communities that they advocated for. I thought Chicago's Punch In the Face put it well; "People who truly care don't have to wear their politics on their sleeves/And they can handle the fact that there's people who don't agree."

In 2007 my thinking was revolutionized. After quitting my job I had some free time and started hanging around a local community center. Volunteering was suggested to me as way to weasel into non-profits, so I started offering some help in their tutoring center and after-school program. It didn't take me long to see that more change occurred in one day here than in all my years of holding signs. People were making real tangible differences on a daily basis. I saw kids in basketball leagues instead of on the corner. I saw middle schoolers coming to get tutoring with hopes that they would be the first person in their family to go to college. I saw productive outlets for youth instead of the bullshit conspicuous consumption lifestyle that we are indoctrinated with. It was incredibly inspiring.

Now I am not saying this to be holier than thou; I do not think I am better than anyone because of my change in attitude. People can do whatever the fuck they want. I am no better than anyone. I just feel like I have found something that many punks unfortunately never see. Not to mention it was a big contrast from going to shows and seeing punks who didn't seem to give a fuck about anyone besides themselves and real people who wanted better things for themselves, their family, and their community.

So I weaseled my way in there and am still there today. It is a place where I can momentarily escape the world and play basketball with fourth graders, go to water parks, or my personal favorite, get dating advice from sixth graders. (One kid said to me, "Man, you wanna look good. You wanna get some gold chains, some jerseys, and some Air Jordans." I asked if I would look silly and he goes, "Naw man, you'll look fly!") These are a few of the benefits of working there. This is not meant to be some motivational posi-tyrade. I guess the point is that I never thought "change" would take these forms. I always thought it was police and batons, studs and spikes, and (white) punks.

For all the "rebelliousness" of punk I feel like there are various punk status quos. There are a lot of rules and regulations in a culture that supposedly rejects those things. For me "punk" today means questioning everything around me, including punk itself.

Throughout my time with being surrounded in political communities I heard a lot of talk about "change." The only real change that I have witnessed has been through working "within the system" as I've watched community center employees, teachers, union organizers, and others accomplish their goals. I think it's important to show dissent, but I have never known a positive consequence of a riot. Simultaneously, I don't advocate working "within the system" (very vague terms anyway). For one example, I still believe that elections are controlled and thus I don't vote. Why do you I tell you this? I want to emphasize that one's views don't have to be black and white. Extremes are dangerous. Look at history for proof.

I anticipate that many punks will disagree with me. That's alright, I'm not here to make new pals. I'm no guru on the subject so feel free to take a different stand.

I try not to live my life by song lyrics but "You want to change the world by breaking rules and laws, but people don't do that in the real world of ours" is so fucking on point. Husker Du knew what was up; when I first heard this song as a teenager I didn't feel as enthusiastic about it but now I do. I'm not out to "save" anyone, but at 25, I realize that I will never accomplish anything staying within the punk ghetto.

—Mike Friedberg

*I agree with you that "activism" should start in the community that you are in and if you are even the least bit perceptive or genuinely interested in helping the world, you will be able to see where there is need in your surroundings. Punk is, in its roots, anti establishment, but I really think that punks have a tendency to glom onto larger causes to claim that society is against them as much as it is against someone, say for instance, in Thailand right now. We all know that there are struggles everywhere, but the tragedy going on there is not the same thing, not even close… But don't forget that there are places in the world that do call for numbers in order to change things, Iran for instance. Also, often seeing massive numbers of people together for a cause, is an inspiring and motivating factor to keep smaller/community organization going. I am thinking of the current status of immigration reform in this country. While you may understand "activism" as something that may be most effective in a smaller setting, I can tell you that seeing tens of thousands of people shutting down downtown Chicago or rallying in swarms on the National Mall is powerful and inspirational to those who take part in it. When undocumented and documented people converge in numbers so large that some of the fear of abuse, deportation and separation of families is taken away and when people go even further and out their documentation status at their own risk, you can't tell me numbers don't matter (check out what some of the undocumented youth in Chicago are doing at www.peterholderness.com/iyjl/index.html). Now more than ever, with Obama sending troops to the border, numbers may help make people feel safer. I would have to agree that political action in punk has somewhat degenerated into a parody of sorts of bickering and extreme stupidity on both "PC" and anti-"PC" sides, to use your words, a "punk ghetto," but punk is dynamic enough to include people who really have their shit together, like you, and while activism within punk has let down a lot of punks (white and non white), I wouldn't call anyone a sell out for not living up to some stringent set of rules that their young "activist" days held them to. I would say that abandoning those beliefs have more to do with you than the very real issues that some punks have the luxury of walking away from. The aim here is not to make people feel guilty about their privilege, but to find a happy medium, like you did, and not to give up on making this place better. I don't think you are preachy in the least, but what you have done is set a great example for others by balancing your disenchantment with "activism" as you related to it as a punk and as a punk who is truly an activist. Thanks for your letter, I hope others will be able to achieve what you have!*

*—Mariam*

*Dear MRR–*

Greetings. As the author of *Punker Than You*, I would like to thank you for the glowing review you printed last month (April 2010 issue, no. 323). I am glad to see that your reviewer, Jesse Luscious, liked it overall.

I was admittedly concerned that certain parts of the book would rub certain readers the wrong way—the book is meant as an honest look at the scene from one individual's point of view. There are also some scenes, like the Morganfield kids accidentally crashing the White Power concert, that I felt were risky and had potential to confuse or even anger some readers. However, I was thrown by the part of the book that did cause some offense. I'll quote the second-last paragraph from the review:

"(Narrator) Poker Cartwright does have some odd views about female punks, and I'm not sure if the author shares these views or if they're injected into the story for purposes of juxtaposition with his straight girlfriend. In early sections of Punker Than You, he is madly in lust with multiple punk girls while in later sections he equates punk females as having 'skin scarred with tattoos'. The punk women by drinking and looking 'offensive', giving in to failure and degradation. To be fair he only mentions 'drunk punks' in these passages, but unlike pretty much every other part of the book, he doesn't differentiate between the particular women he's talking about and all of the other punk women that exist both in his literary world and in the real world. It was a jarring enough section that I took note of it and upon rereading it I'm still puzzled about its inclusion."

While it's rarely a good idea for an author to respond to criticism in a review, I did feel I should try and answer this one point. I'm a fan of bad ideas, in any case.

At the time Poker is making these comments, he is coming from the viewpoint of being a bit older and more conscious of his own mortality. By the second half of the book, he is dealing with a work injury that is going to limit his mobility for the rest of his life, and he has also cut back on his drinking and no longer dabbles in drugs, unlike some of his former bandmates. He is trying to describe the contrast between the punks who live as if there is no tomorrow ("No Future") and his non-punk wife, who has strict plans for her future. It was a passage that came out awkwardly on the page, and I thought at the time that this awkwardness suited Poker's character.

Moreover, Poker's speech was intended to be a condemnation of both male and female punks who seemingly throw away their lives. To quote Poker from the same passage:

"Time eventually destroys you even if you don't contract a disease or get hit by a car or get stabbed by a mugger or die in some other act of random misfortune. Why try? Why strive when failure is so much easier to accomplish, when the bulk of existence is nothing but a day-to-day drudgery that only a fool could enjoy?"

Upon re-reading my own manuscript, however, I can see how the reviewer drew a different conclusion, and a different idea of whom and what Poker was railing against. A more through editing might have fixed this problem, but that is one of the risks of self-publishing, I suppose.

Writing in the first person is always risky, in that the writer can easily and unintentionally put his own ideas into his character's dialogue. I won't lie: some of the ideas expressed in the novel are indeed my own. Jake Punkaholic's anti-tattoo rant in the book's first half is based on opinions about body modification that I have held for some time, though I did try and make the argument true to Jake's own life experiences and character.

As for Poker, his twenty-year-old self and his thirty-year-old self differ wildly on a variety of topics, from the music business to drug consumption to hometown pride to male-female relations. In the case of his observations on the apparent self-destruction of others in the punk scene, he is speaking from a different level of maturity that he might have earlier, and the speech in part was meant to convey that maturing viewpoint. Here, as in other places, I made a clear effort to separate my own prejudices from that of my characters wherever possible. That was my intention as the author, at least.

On a much more self-serving point, I also noticed that when you printed the cover price, your review header did not include shipping cost. One of the things I have learned from this whole self-publishing exercise is that a 400 page book costs a ridiculous amount of money to ship, at least in Canada ($12.00 CDN per copy, believe it or not, and that's ground shipment). If any of your American readers are looking for a copy, they will probably get a much better deal if they order it online from Interpunk.com—if you could mention that, I would greatly appreciate it.

Finally, it was nice to have an excuse to read *MRR* again after so many years. The cashier gave me an odd look when I was buying my copy (I suppose I could have said I was getting it for my nephew), but it was a fun trip down memory lane nonetheless.

All the best,

—Dave McIntyre

www.davemcintyre.ca

*Dear MRR—*

Cold chilling with my pitbull, new issue in the mailbox, representing the greasy bottom of the bucket in dirty South Florida where it is hot as a frying pan on a Friday in early May, and I'm hella jaded, man. Wondering how in the hell is *Maximum Rocknroll* planning to overcome the loss of the one columnist I have come to rely upon? Roehrs… F@#k it, though—life is unpredictable, increasingly fragile, and crazy as a shithouse rat sometimes. I don't know—my next door neighbor smokes crack and bangs tranny hookers! After all, when I walked outside at 3am to smoke a Marlboro two nights ago, I found myself in the front row of the shitstorm, and it pissed me off, because my wife is asleep inside, and the spectacle would most certainly have rattled her already tenuous worldview. Ah, man—the kid down the street is the most dangerous kind of drug dealing gangster: young, chemically imbalanced, and not too bright from the jump, so the pills, crack, and weed are certainly not doing his challenged synapses any favors, you know?

What I'm trying to say is difficult to articulate, but sometimes a keen moment of crystalline awareness makes the everyday madness fall into an appropriate level of unimportance and triviality. And Brace

Belden's column about the tragic death of his young friend is imbued with a visceral sense of anger, hate, and injustice that makes the stupid shit on my block appear as the insignificant, redundant details of whole milk white suburban generic America that they actually are! Because death is painful, unfair, uncompromising, and horrific—so everything happening in life is really gravy, no matter how difficult, violent, or twisted. I'm a married man with a Victoria's Secret model wife, a modest arsenal, a fantastic family, and the meanest monster pitbull in Florida! I've had my priorities readjusted by Brace Belden's column, enough so I'm willing to squander my valuable time spitting out a thank you note! Perhaps there is hope for *Maximum Rocknroll*, after all- although I am missing my "in your face for the straight laced punk as a spiked bat" columnist Mr. Bruce Roehrs.
Peace and chickengrease from,
—Shamus
Full speed ahead punk rock fury dodging Dade County bullets and brickbats on the germ infested edge of a swamp.

*Dear Clowns at MRR–*
You have made a terrible mistake in letting Brace Belden go. He is super funny and has actually helped me work through some pretty dark times. While my whole world was in shambles from my mom going to jail for lottery ticket fraud and my dad's new lady always pushing me out of the house to go buy her smokes, Brace's words really spoke to me loud and clear. I'm not a thuggish wigger (wigger is white + nigger, right?), but I am a person that looked to his columns a whole lot for guidance. Please reconsider.

Oh yes, this too… please ask Logan Dean Worrel to change his column header. He looks to be sickly, gaunt and when he talks about jerking off I throw-up in my mouth a little bit. Not because I think of a little ailing man rubbing one out is bad, but because someone that frail should have a caregiver do it for him, a live in nurse or second cousin perhaps.
Thanks,
—Tony Party

*A couple things: Yeah, that Brace Belden is the voice of a polyester wearing, fat Elvis look alike generation of punks who love to use the word "wigger," no matter how fucked up or offensive it is (thanks for clearing that definition up, luckily for me you won't have to give me the definition of Wetback or sand nigger, cuz I have been called them my whole life). Your letter has inspired me to beg him to come back to us. Logan is pretty fucking gaunt and pale, even for a white boy, but even if he was jerking off in front of you, wearing just his tube socks, his personality would win you over.*
*—Mariam*

*MRR–*
You published an amusing interview with John Paul, former bass player of Really Red. He repeatedly described me as a Marxist. As flattering as that is, I suggest that John Paul wouldn't know a Marxist from a pharmacist, and I thought that his description of my political views was quite hilarious. As a result of his apparent diet of Limbaugh/Beck/FOX lies, it seemed to John Paul anyone is a Marxist who doesn't aspire to unlimited personal greed, and who might have ideas about equality, justice, and democracy that are to the left of Hermann Goering. It seemed that he was implying that he actually thinks that Obama, Clinton, etc. are some kind of socialists—no, he said MAOISTS!!! I'm sure most readers of *MRR* are too intelligent to fall for that nonsense.

Making it the law that people have to pay corrupt predatory insurance companies for health "insurance" (not health care) is "socialist?" Aren't these insurance companies the zenith of the capitalist ideal? How about the "socialist"...no, "Maoist" act of forking over hundreds of billions to corrupt banks, corrupt brokerage companies, and CEOs to do with as they want, no strings attached. That's socialism? I think ol' JP needs a dictionary. There's yet another reason why I wrote the lyrics for Really Red. But, in all fairness, the guy was a monster bass player, and that is a fact. But, just for the record, let me say this: All of the claptrap and labels, from JP, Beck, FOX, and everyone else, about socialism, capitalism, left, right, up and down—to me it is all a bunch of bullshit. You still don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows. It is really just a matter of what is decent, fair, just, and truthful.

It doesn't matter what "ism" you call it, things are decent, fair, just, and true, or they aren't. *That* is the bottom line, to me. Facts are facts, and there are plenty of scholarly books on history out there, from various sources. There *are* actually some agreed upon historical realities based upon these thing called *facts*. To me, it really isn't that complicated to figure out. Killing innocent people is wrong. People shouldn't do that, and those that do are evil scum. All people should have food, health care, a place to live, a job, and freedom from violence. That's it, and that is what people have been fighting for or fighting against forever. I'll go with the "for" side, no matter what it is called.

In the US, the entire two party system is rotten with corporate corruption and a serious third, and fourth, party is needed. Not that you asked.

Enough about all that, as I used to yell from the stage at the end of a gig: Now go make your own band!
—URon

*Hey Layla–*
So I had to head down south (from Birmingham-ish) cos I was due to be at the inquest of my friend's death. He had just turned 27 a couple of days earlier, and a bunch of us who'd been at uni together decided we'd go out and get proper drunk like we had done a few years earlier, in that fucking awful place, Winchester, we'd lived for three years. After only a couple of hours, our friend Rus went to the toilet and didn't return. Eventually we went to find him and he'd collapsed. After our slow afternoon drinking rate of three pints in three hours Russ had stacked it and no fucking clue until Martyn banged on the door and shouted at him. When he came out he was fucking *green*. We gave him water and sat him down and eventually tried to move on. It took us a couple of hours to do a couple of hundred meters. NHS Direct said to get him to hospital. Hospital sent him home (his parents lived less than 20 miles away) and we carried on. The next morning he was dead. The sum of the parts of this story is that I found out from a Home Office pathologist that he had an undiagnosed and rare condition called Marfan Syndrome.

So, I couldn't afford a ticket down to Winchester til my dole arrived, but I didn't want to leave it til the last minute. So I bought a ticket to London with my last few quid and arranged to meet a mutual friend of Russ'. I got my dole on Tuesday and had a ticket to London about 11am. I checked my dole had arrived; it had, and I topped up my (fucking) Oyster card to make sure that I'd have enough dole left over to spend on getting fucking drunk with my friends and have nowt to worry about. I got on the tube at Euston. then figured I'd go to Camden (I knew of half decent veggie burgers, and had heard of some totally vegan "donation" cafe). When I got there, some plastic punk asked me for a cigarette. I was smoking my last one and told him so (thought I doubt he believed me), then I remembered there's a punk-only record store in Camden. He didn't know where it was so his golf-sign holding friend gave me directions. Within 10 minutes I'd spent 30 quid and I had to get *outta there* quickly. I'm a pop kid at heart, but I've no shame in my penchant for peace punk and crust and whatever. So I picked up some TBIAPB and a Burnt Cross 7" and the guy gave me a 12" by some band I never heard of and I got some zine with a peacepunk CDR and I got a BUNCH of zines, one of which was *MRR*, which I haven't bought in a long time.

Anyway, I was reading the whole thing (I usually read the ads first, they're the most exciting part and I can't resist them), but as I'm on such a tight budget I made sure I read everything in order. And I read yr column, and I was *so surprised* to read that an *MRR* columnist was in Skinned Teen. I mean, I can't really pretend I know anything about Skinned Teen, I strayed across some MP3s and I fucking love them. But I figured, I dunno, everyone grew up and got jobs, or moved to a hippie commune, or "got serious" or something. So, I don't even know. Maybe I think it's life affirming, that someone who is (I think probably slightly older than me) was making great music when they were younger than me, and I completely missed out on it, but it's still there, and yr still involved. Maybe I totally underestimate people, but… well, either way, it's a nice surprise.

I think I know one guy who knows anything about Skinned Teen (probably saw you live) but he knows everything about *every* band and kind of disturbs me with his encyclopedic knowledge.
So there we have it, a thank you, and a shedload of bullshit from a drunk Midlander ontha hottest day of the year.
ETC.
—Ray x

*Hi MRR–*
By way of introduction, I am a *MRR* reader and recent subscriber. I email you for two reasons. First, I think the discussion in the letters section is getting interesting and I appreciated you mentioning there was "debate" over the April George Tabb column. I read it, got the joke, but it still left me uncomfortable—I appreciate that and I hope *MRR* continues to push the boundaries and discussion about the scene because that, to me, is one of the many things that makes *MRR* a great read.

Secondly, I am emailing to confess to you my abhorrent zine habit and wondering if there isnt a way I can contribute to *MRR* while *MRR* might help to supply my zine fix. I do not live in the Bay area but would love to help with zine section of *MRR*. Also, have you ever put the image of the front cover of a zine next to a review? It's just something I know I would appreciate.
Regards,
—Abbey

*Hey Abbey–*
*Tragically pretty much all the reviewing in MRR is done inhouse by people that live in the Bay Area, but as mentioned previously there are other ways you can get involved. We frequently run guest columns from our readers, and all the interviews and scene reports are sent in by punks like you... MRR will continue to be a space that represents all different aspects of punk, the shit that makes us feel uncomfortable as well as empowered.*

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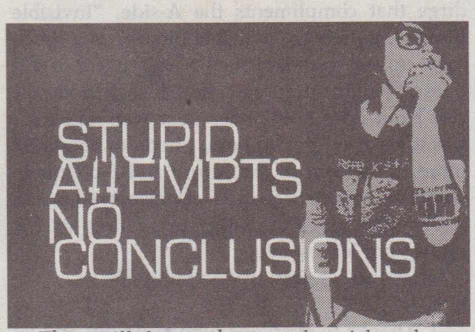
# COLUMNS




This will be a short and quick column because I'm pretty busy signing up for high school math classes in case I want to go to college next year. I am secretly hoping I will just have to go back to high school and all my columns will be a series of zany, generation gap related events. What else happened this month? I went to San Francisco. That was cool. It was definitely a bourgeois-type vacation. I flew, I bought a flight with my roommate's credit card, I watched in-flight movies and ate some in-flight crackers, I wore comfortable shoes. I wanted to go to someplace warmer to relax off the misery of my cold fog—and sleet—weary existence and take a break from the drudgery of home life. I wanted to see exotic bands you only see on internet ads (7 Seconds?!) and buy punk shirts you only see in the back of Circus Magazine. From my drunk friends, I got a big city haircut normally attributed to those identifying with alternative sexualities (at least, that's what the missus behind me in the check-out line at Sobey's said the other day). This column is exactly the column Jeff Ott was complaining about in the Fifteen song "MRR."

So I thought the big-punk-Mecca-city would be different from the small, ignorant one I live in and this inspirational eye opening would change my life. Turns out I actually saw twenty whole bands in my time in the other Fog Town (the city I live in also identifies as "Fog Town") and witnessed exactly one female performer, a singer in a very good and fairly popular Bay Area powerviolence/hardcore band. It turns out gender parity is only reserved for totally progressive venues like government workplaces or whatever and hardcore is totally beyond that.

It was a little upsetting and I figured there must be another explanation. I liked these youth crew bands and they all seemed like nice guys who wouldn't be asshole misogynists that relegated all women in general to a cupcake-baking, non-performance role. The only logical conclusion I can come to is that all the ladies in bands had gone into a sweet, secret punk womyn separatist zone, and the React! Records Showcase had no choice but to book all-male bands, save for one token girl who, in a whim of good gesture, agreed to play the fest.

All those guys talked so much about being good role models, so in turn I guess I will now only exclusively listen to hardcore bands fronted and inclusive of my own identified gender.

Luckily there's some pretty sweet new stuff fitting into this category, because I don't want to rock the boat. Here's what I've been rocking, especially since my lifestyle change…

Outlook: I snagged this Olympia band's 7" at React! fest; two of the members were stuffing sleeves on a couch outside the venue. I'm not 100% into the record because I think the vocals are too quiet and I want it to sound like what Adriana probably wants to be doing: punching the listener in the face. Lyrics diplomatically address hardcore apathy ("Nothing Begets Nothing") and poseurs who claim to be un-sided in the Israel/Palestine dispute when they live in a country so clearly supporting one side thereby making individual neutrality a myth because if they don't say anything, they are silently supporting the government side. Cool.

Punch: Token girl singer band of React! fest. They totally ruled, the music is hectic. Only downfall was hearing every single preceding band be like, "And every band here is fucking awesome, even Punch, I don't see many bands like that." Really? Did you miss the whole American powerviolence explosion of the last three years… or did you just mean lady-fronted bands?

Mindless: The obvious comparison is Hatred Surge since it's the same singer, but more fast parts. It's a little more on the punk end of dark hardcore/powerviolence than the metal side. Still angry and brutal as fuck. They have some tapes out on Financial Ruin. Get them.

Xrapexrevengex: Kids from fucking Calgary, which is crazy because Calgary is like the Houston of Canada. It's all like new money and prairies and stampedes. This band calls themselves grindcore, but don't let that turn you off. It's just that power violence isn't a genre option on Myspace. Three girls and two boys. Unapologetically and violently feminist. Raging songs. Find this band!

Panty-Hos: Despite the terrible name, this St. Henri (south Montreal neighborhood that is basically Anglophone punk-loft utopia) band is good. Stripped down, danceable punk with extremely melodic vocals. All-girl, props for going all the way.

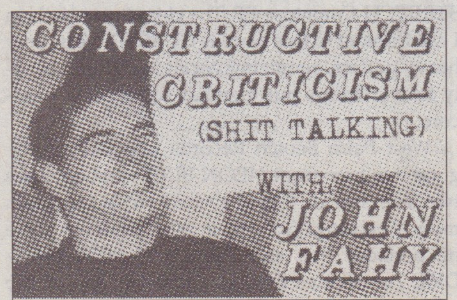
Sick Fix: I got to see this amazing band in Montreal last summer. One of my best friends lives in Montreal; she's 36, gay and straight edge, but dropped out of hardcore in the '90s after feeling continually un-included (wow, I wonder why?). I convinced her and all her lesbian ex-punk neighbors to come with me to this show after regaling them with tales of how the strong front-woman was the strongest and sickest front-person they'd ever see. Unfortunately for my cause, the band Glue (the boy Glue, from Boston) opened and my queer friends got all duded out and left. I tried to explain how the macho posturing/onstage presence thing was ironic, but it was really hard to explain out of context because they hadn't been to a hardcore show since like 1996. So they all left and bummingly got to miss Michelle screaming, "You think I'm fucking ugly? You think I'm fucking fat? I don't give a fuck!" in little hardcore boys' faces.

Glue: Speaking of Glue, there's a girl Glue from Olympia my roommate showed me that's pretty good.

Rvivr: Speaking of Olympia, I have reserved this co-ed infectious pop punk unit for solo bike rides when I'm feeling down. I'm currently training to be a tri-athlete (ask me about this in two months and I'll probably be eating chips in the backyard, pretending this dream never happened), so this is all the time.

Womb Raider: Thrashy hardcore from Montreal, half girls. In your face shit about violence against women.

There's a million more, obviously, but I'm always looking for more bands in the girl-cult or gender-inclusive cult, so if you got something, hit me up: Juls Generic / 153 Prowse Ave ext / St. John's, NL/A1E 1W2/Canada.




**Are you suffocating on your own Twatty insignificance?**
**I can help you!**

I've just returned from 305 Fest in Miami. It's always good to see people from out of town getting mental in the suffocating Florida heat. Highlights this year certainly included LIBYANS, COKE BUST, MEHKAGO N.T., FOREIGN OBJECTS, THOU, CONSULAR, NAZI

DUST, HELLMASS, WITCHES, MAUSER, SORRY MOM and probably a few others I'm forgetting at this exact moment. Now I'm way behind on my music column, but I'm glad I waited because I picked up a few things at the fest that I'm really excited about.

Before the fest, I was out of town for about a month and when I got home I found a pile of new releases waiting for me from Drugged Conscience Records. First up, MERCHANDISE has repressed to tape one of their older demos (which I believe was only on CD-R previously). This is really, really catchy, moody punk shit. I'm glad this demo is going to get some more exposure because I liked these songs when I first heard them a year or so ago. This band has been compared some to THE WIPERS, but really this is its own deal; it's hard to describe and very, very good, and those are solid reasons to pick this up. I hear they're changing their sound drastically on their upcoming LP, and while I'm looking forward to hearing it, I think I may miss the older sound of this excellent band. If you get a hold of one of these self-titled demos from Drugged Conscience, make sure you ask if he's got any of the Terminal Jagger Jane's Addiction Box Set tapes left—it's newer material than the self-titled demo and another killer release from the band.

WHITE GUILT from Syracuse, New York came through Fort Myers recently and destroyed us all with noisy, powerfully negative hardcore. Chris/D.C.R. has released their second demo and it's miles above the first release, which was solid in its own right. The riffs on this new tape pack a punch and the vocals are a perfect mix of screamy, complain-y, reverbed hysteria. Definitely pick this up—it's in and out pretty quickly with five short songs, but you won't be disappointed. Not far off from this sound is the also D.C.R.-released posthumous BAD YEAR tape. This is also pretty negative fare here. Like the WHITE GUILT material, the playing behind it packs a punch that makes me think of something like DOUBLE NEGATIVE, but both bands have some odd, moody parts that break things up perfectly on a quick demo.

Last of the tapes included is the HOMESTRETCH Comatose EP. The closest comparison I can think of to this band is CURSED. Very, very heavy guitars, agonizing vocals and thunderingly heavy drums put together some bleak hardcore.

West Palm Beotch Records released a long-gone live tape from NEON BLUD that captures two live sets of their psyched-out noisy punk mess. The songs from their Whipps demo come off perfectly live, and Dave V. of MERCHANDISE contributes second guitar on one of the sets. Allegedly Dave will soon be joining the band permanently and hopefully things will get wilder from there. This tape should still be available for download at the West Palm Beotch blog. I want to say that I'm hearing a little PUSSY GALORE here, but this is much more bummed-out-punk.

WITCHES have released a three-song EP with "Big Rivers" on the A-side and "Young Ones" and "Gift Horse" on the flipside. This band played one of the best sets at 305 this year, and the record measures up to their live show. The music is fairly chilled-out indie rock, but the vocals make this a beautiful, haunting record. Another record I picked up at the fest is the one-sided LIBYANS 7" with "Paralyzed" and "Keep Waiting" on the A-side and lyrics etched into the B-side. This is a gorgeous looking record overall, with translucent covers housing the vinyl. The first song, "Paralyzed," is an instant classic—extremely catchy tune. Liz's voice changes perfectly between the stop/start punk verse and creepy chorus, which is totally infectious. This record is limited to 400 copies, so get on top of it, punks.

Pickle-Pants Marshall's IFB Records is brewing up some scathing, ruthless hardcore punk as of late. First off, the XTRA VOMIT/POSITIVE NOISE split is relentlessly fast, mean hardcore on both sides. Michigan punks never stop raging on this one. POSITIVE NOISE are probably angrier than ever on this release, while still sounding like things may fall apart amid the mayhem. XTRA VOMIT nail together furious vocals, classic, hateful guitar riffs and furiously fast drumming to create six minutes of fury on their side. Excellent record, excellent people. Pickle is going to be releasing CLOUDRAT's LP soon—more scathing Michigan punk with female vocals covering seriously bleak topics. I've heard this LP un-mastered and it is going to be completely furious. Heavy, hateful hardcore.

While this was probably covered long ago elsewhere, Iron Lung Records' SOCIETY NURSE EP is top shelf off-kilter hardcore that has been a constant on my turntable along with SLICES' LP, both of which were released back-to-back by the Lungmen. This is a label that I'm constantly checking up on to see what they've got brewing. Mostly you can't go wrong with these releases. SLICES' previous EPs lead the way to the sound on their Cruising LP, but this is easily their best output—songs are varied, messy and memorable. I hope that both of these will be repressed because I imagine they won't last long.

DIET COKEHEADS have released a single on Vinyl Rites/Drugged Conscience that captures their odd, semi-sleazy, noisy punk material very well. This wasn't my favorite material of theirs when I originally heard it, but this record finds a way of sending its verses into your head long after listening. This record was just released, but I believe it's somewhat older material for them. Having seen the band fairly recently, I'm excited to see what their next moves are, because the material they're playing live is flawless.

RATIONAL ANIMALS have been somewhat quiet lately, I haven't heard of them playing around much. However, their second EP, Distorted Temptation, continues to push the kind of material from their first EP into a more warped dimension. The vocals here are more confident, which makes them all the more disturbing over this massively damaged, psyched out hardcore. The keeper track is easily the last one, the title track "Distorted Temptation". The steady, brooding vocals on this track go perfectly over the driving, negative tones the guitars are churning out. Excellent record, eat it up.

SLAVE SCENE's third cassette release is heavily noisy, particularly the B-side, but the hysteria this band creates live still shines through from the beginning of the first track. Without a doubt this band takes the most basic, sleazy riffs and spins them into a fucking bludgeoning nightmare that is absolutely relentless. Press play and lose your mind.

Finally, DADS' first (I think?) 7" is an instant classic. The B-side, "Homo Concentration", is a dragged-out, feedback-laden, anti-hardcore dirge that compliments the A-side, "Invisible Blouse", perfectly. "Invisible Blouse" is a much more upbeat sounding rock 'n' roll tune that still doesn't lose the desperate, reverb-soaked vocals. The band does both styles very well and their sets are a good mix of both. I hope to hear a lot more from them in the future and I definitely want to see more of the artwork displayed on the insert, which is brilliantly stupid (lots of *ET*, nudity, pot leaves, etc.).

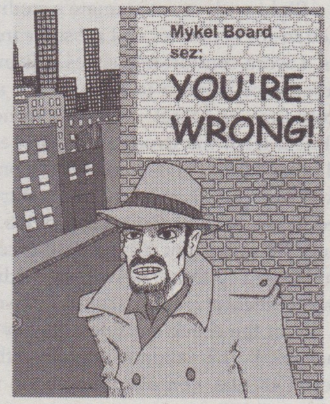
That's all for now, up the punghhh.

ENDNOTES:

1. Thanks to everyone who hung out and let me crash on my big weirdo tour. Dan, Napalm Beth, Zack and Becki, Chris Eck, Meghan, Kira, etc.

2. PANZRAM demos are done, man.

3. Send me demos and mixtapes! Bollocks the pigs! John Fahy / 15011 Lakeside View Drive / Apt. 2402 / Fort Myers, FL 33919. Or: fahy_john@hotmail.com




"If God didn't exist, it would be necessary to invent him." – Voltaire

"What if God is not as imagined? What, for instance, if he disapproves of gamblers, especially those whose purported belief in Him is dependent on some acorn-beneath-the-cup mentality? God might prefer the honest doubter to the sycophantic chancer." – Julian Barnes.

For months I've been reading about how the Texas Board of Education is trying to insert Intelligent Design in the school curriculum. What's all the fuss about?

For those who don't know, Intelligent Design is a kind of creationism. Instead of the usual creationist Seven-Days-Pop-There's-The-World!, Intelligent Design people believe that someone or something set things in motion. Then, there was evolution. Instead of lightning striking a primordial soup, there was a creator who did the designing.

Intelligent Design doesn't use the word God

right out, but who else could it be? Aliens? Even if it were aliens, who designed the aliens? Ultimately, it has to be God.

Christians use Intelligent Design to get around the evidence that the earth is millions of years old. The universe is much older. These facts make it hard to swallow the mere 6000 years that biblical creationism can explain. Intelligent Design people try to bring God to Darwinism. Their basic argument, though, is the same as that of the creationists:

"When you look at the workings of a watch, if you see that the gears move against one another… what one does affects the other, in calculated precision. You know there must be a watchmaker. A watch cannot happen by accident."

Darwinists say that, given enough time, the watch can, in fact, happen by accident. Like monkeys at the keyboard writing Shakespeare.

In the current evolution discussion, then, there are three theories: Darwinism (chance and the survival of the fittest), Intelligent Design and Creationism. I will propose a third theory, but to understand it you have to come take a shit with me.

Flash to the john: It must be all that matzo. Binds me right up. It's lucky I cut my nails because my middle finger is now inserted into my anus, all the way to the third knuckle. I just touch the edge of a turd. As dry as the Gobi.

I grunt it down a little, tightening my abdomen as I give a peristaltic push. Ahh, it's a little farther down now. I can just wrap my finger around it. It's about the size and shape of a Brussels sprout. Push a bit more. Pull with the finger. Come on. A little more. Almost out. Kerplunk! There it is. Sinking in the toilet like a drowned kitten. I reach back in to coax out another one. Jeezus. This is awful.

Why can't your rectum come with a little more lube? Your nose comes with lube. Your mouth comes with lube. Why not your asshole?

I push again, trying to squeeze down the next one. Silver lights pop in my brain… behind my eyes. I nearly faint. In that moment I have a revelation… a vision. I see God—the designer. Yes!

Let's look at the evidence: it's as plain as the dried dung in my rectum.

Take my balls… please. What a stupid invention. The most sensitive, painful part of a guy's body and where is it? Hanging outside, ready for the slam of a stepped-on rake or an errant baseball. My appendix is protected by layers of muscles and fat… and how often do I use that? But my balls?

"Hmmm, well I think I'll just leave 'em out to dangle in the air. Leave those fragile glands in a spot they'll most likely get damaged."

What kind of thinking is that? Dumb!

And what about the other part of that dangly device?

"Oh baby, I'd love to, but..."

How come I can't? Or at least can't always. Why can't I just raise my dick like I can raise my middle finger? I can lift that finger to tell someone to fuck off whenever I want to, but (especially after a certain age) I have to take a little blue pill to raise my penis. Why?

But the moronitude extends to more than just me.

And how about the history of the world? Before humans?

90% of all species that ever existed on earth are extinct. They didn't work and died out. Is that intelligent design? Sounds pretty dimwitted to me.

Besides stupidity, there's downright evil in the history of the world. Is it "intelligent design" for some people to be able put others in ovens?

Once, I answered a Facebook critic who said he drove an SUV because he "wanted to show you PC people that we are free to drive whatever we want."

"You're free to nail your penis to a tree," I said. "That doesn't mean you should."

But why should we even be able to nail our penises to a tree? Is that a useful ability in the year of our iPad 2010? Isn't it plain stupid?

Oh, I know what the Christians/Jews say. That's free will™. God gave the gift of free will™. It's up to individuals to use it for good or to toast their fellow humans—or nail their own penises to a tree.

Free will? Free will??? I don't have free will. Can I walk through walls? No! Can I flap my arms and fly? No! Can I make myself invisible? Keep an erection for an hour? No. No! No! Why aren't those things part of free will?

I can imagine God designing free will.

"Let's see. I have a choice. Either I allow people to murder one another… in huge quantities, and build ovens for the bodies… or I let them fly. I think I'll choose mass murder. Hmmm, should I let people be able to turn invisible or should I let 'em be able to nail their penises to trees? Hah, the answer is obvious. Nail those dicks."

It's crazy.

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What I propose is an alternative to evolution, intelligent design and creationism.

The Intelligent Design people say, "Look at the world. Look how everything works in one beautiful pattern. Even if the world is old, you can see it must have been designed by some great intelligence."

I say, "Look at the world. Look at earthquakes, hurricanes, war, capitalism and American Idol. It must have been designed by some great idiot."

And that's my theory. Stupid design.

Why does it hurt so much to have a kid?

Why are black holes eating the universe, destroying everything in their path?

Why are newborns so fragile that they'll die when left on their own?

Why are our heads supported by such a flimsy thing as the neck? Ripe for the axe or an accident under a truck.

Why do teeth rot just when an animal (or person) gets too old to chew effectively?

Why are there mosquitoes, cancer, viruses, swine flu?

These things cannot happen by themselves. There's just too much wrong, too much ugliness to happen by accident. The answer is clear: Stupid Design.

Aliens… God… The master planner…. They're idiots. Morons with power. Retards. Mentally challenged.

I say, "Imagine a watch that spins out of control… Where the gears fight each other… Which is right only once every several thousand years… Which requires you to take it apart before you can know what time it is…"

You'd say, "That watch was designed by an idiot."

I'd say, "Exactly!"

The letter X is better designed than this universe. That letter is simple, with clean lines, easy to understand, and causes no pain. The parts work together, getting along well, even when they cross. The same cannot be said of the rest of this universe.

I propose schools teach Stupid Design. Textbooks could be any history, geology or astronomy book. Students can learn about an earth too weak to hold in its own insides, causing volcanoes to wreck havoc like pus out of a pimple.

They can learn about cosmic collisions like the asteroid that wiped out the dinosaurs.

The can learn about human slavery, or the universal tendency of all matter to move to chaos.

Any subject. Any time. Anywhere. It all points to the same unavoidable conclusion. A unified theory of the universe. Stupid Design.

Endnotes: [email subscribers (god@mykelboard.com) or website viewers (www.mykelboard.com) will get live links and a chance to post comments on the column]

—>Bambi does it again dept: President Obama disappointed millions of Americans by announcing his plan to open vast coastal areas to offshore oil drilling.

When we need clean energy and climate solutions, this plan is a giant step backward—allowing oil companies to reap billions while feeding America's addiction to dirty fossil fuels.

Of course Candidate Obama said in 2008, "We can't simply drill our way out of the problem. And we're not going to be able to deal with the climate crisis if our only solution is to use more fossil fuels that create global warming."

The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that the new oil drilling regions would yield only two months worth of oil in the next 20 years.

Talk about Stupid Design…

—>Naughty Boy dept: Army Chief Warrant Officer Lewis Welshofer will spend zero months in jail after a military jury convicted him of homicide. The trial was for the murder of Iraqi prisoner of war Abed Hamed Mowhoush. During an interrogation Welshofer forced Mowhoush headfirst into a sleeping bag, tied him with electrical cord and sat on his chest. There was a penalty, however. Welshofer was sentenced to 60 days restriction to his home, church and office. How horrible!

—>Naughtier people dept: The St. Patrick's Day Four is a group of anti-war protesters who threw blood on a military recruitment center in upstate New York. A judge sentenced them to an average of five months each for "damaging government property and entering a military station for an unlawful purpose." Shows where priori-

ties are, huh?

—>Make up your mind to be naughty dept: In Ashland, Oregon, the mayor cast a tie-breaking vote. That vote defeated a proposal to ban nudity within 1000 feet of schools. Yeah!... But, wait.

After the vote, the mayor sent out an email saying he was rethinking his position because a tourist from Minnesota wrote that he wanted to be naked near Ashland schools. I don't get the fuss. But in any case, it ruins my vacation plans.

—>666 dept: The Virginia House of Delegates has passed a new law. That law will prohibit employers and insurance companies from requiring people to implant microchips into their bodies. Why? Well, one lawmaker gave the reason:

"It might be the mark of the Beast," he said.

Pet owners and parents are exempt.

Pet owners, I can understand. I mean those sub-skin microchips are the mark of the beast. But parents? Already some are doing it... in their children's best interest, of course. Nya hah hah!

—>Look at the right-center lobe for that one dept: Stanford Magazine reports on the new scientific field of decision neuroscience.

Using MRIs to map the brain, Scientists are learning to determine "what triggers certain responses during purchasing decisions." The idea is that if merchants/advertisers can create something to pull that trigger, they can sell more product.

I don't know why they bother. Apple has had that information for years. They can spit into a thimble, name it iSputum, and people will line up around the block to buy it.

—>Keep this under your towel dept: The French magazine Maisonneuve writes that Islamic clerics have decided "there's no opposition to a husband sucking his wife's breasts, but he should avoid drinking her milk." This is related to an earlier decision that "a married couple may engage in oral sex as long as no semen is swallowed."

Sounds positively Christian to me.

—>What the f**k? dept: Google finally admitted that its Nexus One voice recognition software is constructed to censor "offensive words." The software, used on iPhone competitor Android, drives that system's voice activated commands.

There has been much talk in the media lately about financial panics and the Greek debt crisis. I think there is a lot going on behind this crisis that should give us in the USA reason to pause. The last twenty years have seen a radical rise in the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the financial and corporate elite. There have been past spurts of growth in wealth in history, but these were based mainly on new technologies or industry. The last big jump in wealth has been more about the growth of the financial sector and the power of a few huge corporations, and I would argue much of this wealth has not been earned, through say the sales of a new product or technology, but redistributed, from the middle and working classes to the corporate and financial sector.

In years past society was divided into lords and peasants. The lords owned the land and were a tiny elite living a life of luxury. The peasants had no rights and were forced under threat of violence to work the land for the benefit of the lord, labor on his estate, pay him taxes and serve him in time of war. As industrialization and the rise of technology challenged the old feudal landholding order, a new social order of labor and capital emerged. The struggles between labor and capital, as well as those between peasants and lords, led to much of the social strife of the early twentieth century. The old regimes in France, Russia, China and elsewhere were swept away. However, in the US and much of Europe the existing elite was willing to compromise, and after some struggle granted political and economic rights to the lower classes. After the social strife of the '30s and the trauma of the Second World War many of these countries adopted programs that made a "social peace" and transformed them into middle class societies. Since the "capitalist revolution" of the Reagan and Thatcher years there has been a drive by the corporate elite and right wing ideologues to dismantle the policies that created this middle class society and roll back the clock to the gilded age of the late nineteenth century, or even to the feudal age of lore.

In many ways today's worker, while enjoying a high standard of living and much personal freedom, is still a financial peasant. That is to say that much of the wealth an individual earns over their lifetime is quickly redistributed upwards to the elite. Mortgage payments, insurance, taxes, pension contributions and most of the money spent on consumer products are all quickly moved back into the hands of the ruling elite in the form of corporate profits, interest and the like. Some have argued that the push to get so many Americans into debt through means such as expanded homeownership, credit card use and home equity loans is an attempt to "re-peonize" a large segment of society by saddling them with so much debt that they will be forced to work forever only to see all the wealth they create in their lifetime go to interest and debt payments. Indeed, you hear people who are deep in debt from medical bills, sketchy mortgages and similar causes compare their situation to one of slavery or enserfment.

Prosperity for the working classes in America has declined over the last twenty to thirty years. Real wages have been flat, while health care, housing and energy costs have risen rapidly. These rising costs represent a greater redistribution of wealth from the middle and working classes into the hands of the elite. Furthermore, less and less of what one buys comes from a local small business, or even a factory in this country. These products come from factories overseas, distributed by corporate chains to extract the maximum profit for the minimum input along the way. Meanwhile, the wealth of the elite has more than doubled since the Reagan era. Corporate profits and stock prices have soared, as have executive salaries and bonuses. The middle class country that the generation that emerged from the war and depression sought to create has increasingly started to look like the age of the robber barons or a third world "banana republic."

It's no secret how this redistribution of wealth has come about. Under the guise of "deregulation" and "market efficiency" taxes have repeatedly been cut on the super-rich and corporations. Meanwhile, regulations that restrained the excess and risks of financial institutions (such as the depression era Glass Steagall act) were eliminated as "red tape." Likewise, social programs are cut and a war is waged on the unions and anyone else demanding higher wages, benefits or better working conditions. Much of this economic class warfare has been ideologically enshrined in the work of economists like Milton Friedman and conservative think tanks. These provide the ideological rationale behind what is basically class warfare from above. The drive to concentrate wealth in the hands of a business elite and drive down wages and benefits for workers has been exported to the rest of the world as "neoliberalism", or the "Washington consensus." There is much talk from the boosters of these ideas about economic freedom of choice and cutting down big and intrusive government. However, when the International Monetary Fund uses its power to ram "structural adjustments" and "austerity measures" down different countries' throats, it always seems to be the working classes who pay the price while the rich and corporations get tax cuts and sweetheart deals.

Enter the Greek situation. Greece has a large debt and a bloated public sector on top of a stagnant economy. Greece has also seen its share of neoliberal structural adjustments already—tax cuts for the rich and corporations have not led to economic growth as promised, but to a bankrupt government. So now the (mostly unionized) public sector workers are being forced to take cuts to wages and benefits and extension of their retirement age in order to pay off foreign creditors. While it is easy for most people to be critical of public sector workers, we have to remember that the high wages and sweet benefits they enjoy were granted to many private sector workers just a generation ago. Instead of criticizing them for having such benefits, we should be fighting to get those kind of benefits back for the rest of the workforce. Greece suffered a civil war and then decades of military dictatorship. The high wages paid to a lot of the public sector workers are part of the "social peace" that emerged after the end of the dictatorship. Viewed differently, the ruling class struck a bargain with the unions and the radical left by cre-

ating a large public sector workforce and social benefits. The crisis in Greece is not as much a financial panic as it is a reopening of class war and a breakdown of this social peace. The International Monetary Fund will use the crisis to apply "shock doctrine" tactics to force a neoliberal economic regime on Greece that will turn it into a colony of Wall Street and the City of London. This is just a test case, as we know that Portugal, Italy, Spain and Ireland face similar crises. And indeed, the USA and Great Britain have massive debt burdens as well.

The New Deal-era programs of FDR helped to build a middle class society in the post-war era. The right wing and big business have been at war with these programs for decades. They have managed to break the power of the unions and roll back much of the financial regulation while hobbling civil rights and environmental regulations from ever having much effect. The last big government social programs to remain are Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid. How long before there is a US "debt crisis" and our foreign creditors start to demand "structural adjustments" and "austerity measures" to continue to buy US Treasury bonds? This will be an all to convenient excuse to use "shock doctrine" measures to cut Social Security and other popular social programs. When people use a crisis to push through unpopular measures, you always have to be suspect of whose agenda is being advanced. The IMF, the World Bank and other institutions have been used in other countries to break the power of workers and divide up the wealth of nations between corporate interests under the guise of privatization. Beware when politicians start to talk about a falling dollar and rising health care costs, demanding cuts to Social Security or Medicare. Also beware when governments start to privatize basic services like water systems, roads, etc. As we have seen with privatized health care and prisons, putting these services into the hands of corporations doesn't lead to much improvement for society, just funneling huge profits to a small corporate sector. I don't have much faith in the government to run things properly, but I have even less faith in the corporate elite to act in my interests. Keep an eye on how things play out in Greece, as a victory for the financial sector may mean a "crisis" is coming to your country soon.

No one could have known.

That's what they always say after a disaster. Well, it's what the establishment—a good '60s word, let's bring it back!—says. "No one could have known" is the perfect excuse. Don't blame us, we did the best we could, but we're not clairvoyant.

But it's rarely true. Most of the time, the people in charge—the people responsible for what went wrong—*were* warned in advance. They simply chose to ignore the warnings.

Why? In the case of government officials and corporate executives, it's typically because acting on such warnings would cost them money. Sometimes it's because the man or woman who predicts the mayhem about to unfold doesn't have the status, title or connections to make themselves heard.

Mostly it's because scum rises to the top.

After hurricane Katrina destroyed New Orleans, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff called the disaster "breathtaking in its surprise."

"That 'perfect storm' of a combination of catastrophes exceeded the foresight of the planners, and maybe anybody's foresight," Chertoff said.

It didn't surprise everyone. "We certainly understood the potential impact of a category four or five hurricane" on New Orleans, Lt. General Carl Strock, chief of engineers for the US Army Corps of Engineers," said the same week.

I had attended a journalists' convention in New Orleans a few years before that. Probably half the New Orleans residents I met asked me to write about the "big one" that was sure to devastate their city someday.

Except for those who later claimed that nobody could have known, *everybody* knew.

Harry Markopolos, a Boston financial analyst, has a book out titled *No One Would Listen* detailing the eight years he spent trying to convince the SEC to go after Bernard Madoff, who was responsible for the disappearance of $65 billion.

The financial collapse that began in the fall of 2008 was attributable to the burst of the housing bubble, fiscal shenanigans at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and the longstanding practice of allowing investment banks to hire and fire rating agencies. Economists, corporate insiders and journalists had repeatedly warned about these problems since at least 2004. They were ignored, even ridiculed by those who claimed a "new paradigm" was in effect in the US economy.

From the lack of WMDs in Iraq (Scott Ritter knew) to the losing quagmire in Afghanistan (I knew) to the recent mine disaster in West Virginia (inspectors knew), nearly every calamity you can think of could have been avoided. All the idiots in charge had to do was listen to the smart people who weren't.

Adam Cohen writes in *The New York Times*: "Predictions of disaster have always been ignored—that is why there is a Cassandra myth—but it is hard to think of a time when so many major warned-against calamities have occurred in such quick succession. The next time someone is inclined to hold hearings on a disaster, they should go beyond asking why particular warnings were ignored and ask why well-founded warnings are so often ignored."

Cohen answers his own question, citing four causes for institutional resistance to doing the right/smart thing before it's too late: ideology (reflexive thinking), change that would threaten the powers-that-be, inertia and incompetence.

No doubt those factors all play a role. I'd like to add another: the fear to speak truth to power, which is intimately coupled with powers that tell truth to shut up.

In my long work history it was a rare workplace where management sought out new ideas, much less criticism. It was rarer still that a contrarian voice was rewarded, much less heeded. We see the same thing in politics. Those who speak up are smacked down.

All too often, bosses and officials are insecure. Worried more about losing face than doing a good job, they instinctively reject anyone and anything who threatens their prestige. Better to lose a war than to lose face.

The problem is systemic. As long as business schools crank out automatons and companies are willing to hire them, as long as voters reward the smarmiest and godliest over the straight-talkers, as long as playing it safe (i.e. boring) is valued more than taking chances, our society is going to keep screwing up. And it'll all be perfectly avoidable.

Look around today. What are we being warned about? Which smart people are we ignoring? They're everywhere. Let's start with the economists who warn that the US economy is at the end of its rope, that the federal government can't keep increasing the deficit, that underpaying workers as the rich gets richer is a recipe for collapse and revolution.

For my money, the fact that we are ignoring the thousands of scientists who warn of rising floodwaters due to global warming, dust storms and mass famine due to excessive cultivation and overpopulation and untold damage to our ecosystem as thousands of species go extinct proves a terrible point: as a society, we are nearly as stupid as our bosses and public officials.

*Ted Rall is working on a radical political manifesto for publication this fall. His website is tedrall.com.*

**Calling all punks who want to dance: It's time for something new. Please join my dance company!**

An explanation: I began my quote—unquote dance career as a quote—unquote dancer in the band Gravy Train!!! and this resulted in me wanting to study classical dance. I started taking ballet under Lynette Defazio at Laney College in my early twenties and quickly graduated to modern and ethnic forms of dance. From 2005 to 2010 I joined a contemporary Haitian dance company based out of the Malonga Cousquelourd in Oakland, CA—many of the fundamental ethnic dance companies in the East Bay are based out of this studio. My time working in the African dance theater sparked my imagination something savage and prompted

me to explore new and imaginative spaces exploring movement and percussion through a DIY/punk lens. I'm currently studying contemporary modern dance at Cal State East Bay and would like to start a company so I can really know/learn what it means to have a dance company.

Why I want to do this: I was sitting in class watching this documentary on this well-known and well-funded asshole who was big in the modern dance community. That dude was a prick. He accosted his dancers with stupid questions and his work bored me to tears. I knew that if I had one-fourth of the funding I could put something onstage that was every bit as (if not *more*) inspiring, compelling and (most importantly) entertaining.

Expectations: I'll be the first to admit that I don't know what the fuck I'm doing, but the way I figure it is if you can get enough souls who are devoted to movement in one space moving then something kool is bound to happen. It's this law of spontaneity that this proposed company wishes (*begs*) to invoke alongside practice, repetition, discipline and attention to detail.

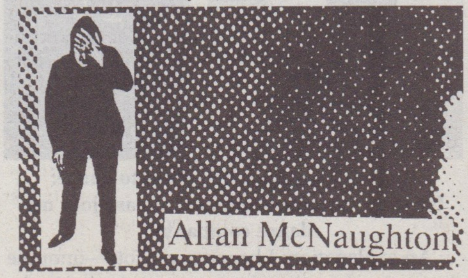
Further expectations: I don't give a fuck about how pretty you are, how flexible you are or how well you can dance. I just care if you're *Feeling It*. Members of the company are expected to share/explore musical/percussive accompaniment, sound recording and set and costume design. Rehearsals will be held at my house and will be broken down as follows:

1. Warm Up
2. Technique Overview
3. Movement across the Floor
4. Improv and Presentation of Improvs
5. Rehearsal of Upcoming Work (optional)
6. Warm Down/Discussion of Class (dance class that is) and new ideas

Classes start in mid-June at my house with a break in early- to mid-July, after which they will resume again normally.

For particulars contact: brontezpurnelldancecompany@gmail.com

Much Love, Bronny




**Ever get the feeling you've been cheated?**

Public Image Limited were playing here in San Francisco on their way back from the Coachella festival, which takes place in the desert in Southern California. I'd never seen them live and to be honest I find their catalog spotty: while their many *hits* are top-notch, their *misses* can be downright unlistenable. Not to mention, tickets were $60. No opening band or anything. I've never paid that much for a show in my life. I've come to regret that though. If I look back at the times in my life where I've passed on a show because the ticket price was too high, am I actually richer now because I didn't see them? Or would I be richer for having seen The Pixies even though it was eight quid (which was more than double the price of a DIY punk gig at the time)? Or Johnny Cash, James Brown, or The Stooges? Who knows? Anyway, as luck would have it, just as I was discussing the pros and cons of splurging on a ticket with Mr. P. Rooney, I get a call from one Sean Dougan, or (SD) of this very rag, and he's phoning to offer me two free tickets to the Public Image Limited concert that he scored off some beer rep in the pub, but can't use. Back of the net.

We get to the gig and the venue is only three-quarters full, if that. Price you pay if you set the price that high Johnny. Once the lights go down it looks a bit more full. I buy my first and last $7 Stella at the bar and note that the T-shirts are $35. What's the percentage markup on that? A ticket, a t-shirt, and a couple of drinks and you're well over a ton in! What is this, arena rock? The show commences and the band is in good form. Lydon seems to be in a cheerful mood: something about playing in PiL agrees with him. He's not the catty, sneering lout we've come to expect from his public persona. Just as well, considering how much most of these folk have paid to be here. They play most of the songs I'd expect (or want) to hear, and a lot more besides. The set lasted about two hours, which is an hour and a half more than I want from pretty much any band. They lost me, the momentum wasn't there, but the bulk of the crowd (predominantly late 30s and up) was chuffed and loving every minute, so fair play. Still, I'm glad I didn't pay for my ticket. I wonder if coming to San Francisco is weird for John Lydon, considering the Pistols broke up here?

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The past couple of weeks have seen a number of Banksy pieces pop up around San Francisco. Banksy is famous for his distinctive style of graffiti, or *street art*. He was apparently in town to coincide with the premiere of his film. When I first caught wind of *Exit Through The Gift Shop* I was pretty excited. Banksy is one of the few street artists that I feel is actually saying something important with his work. The art itself, the way he goes about it, and his anonymity have combined to generate unprecedented interest in the work of someone society at large still considers a vandal. Not to mention the unprecedented sums of money the sale of his work has generated. I wasn't sure what form a Banksy film would take: he goes at great pains to protect his real identity from the media, although he no doubt has a circle of friends, family, and co-conspirators (many of whom appear in the film) who know who he really is. I've read that his own mother denied having a son when confronted by a reporter from the *Daily Mail*.

As it turns out, there *is* footage of Banksy in the film, but with his features masked or blurred, and his voice distorted. The scenes of him and other artists working nocturnally in the streets are the best parts of the film. The story is less about Banksy, however, than it is about Thierry Guetta, the filmmaker who captured all of this footage, and his unusually fast rise to the top of the graffiti art world. Guetta, a Frenchman living in LA, is a street art hanger-on who happens to constantly carry a video camera with him. Eventually he starts dabbling in art himself, and if the storyline of the film is to be believed, Banksy suggested that he should have a little art show in order to get him out of the way while the film could be finished. At this point the film started to remind me of a very different movie.

In *The Great Rock & Roll Swindle*, Malcolm McLaren attempts to deliver a how-to of sorts, a guide to ripping off the music industry for as much money as possible. McLaren was a genius at marketing, promotion, and hype. "Find yourself a group. Make sure they can't play." The Pistols obviously could play, but it certainly worked for Malcolm to market them as inept thugs. As *Exit Through The Gift Shop* plays on, it's easy to imagine Banksy as a McLaren-type svengali. Thierry Guetta's *art* is shit: almost a pastiche of the work of the likes of Banksy, Shepard Fairey, etc. However, with the help of some promotional blurbs from the likes of the aforementioned artists, interest in Guetta's (now Mr. Brainwash) art show reaches Beatlemania levels in LA. He's on the front page of the paper, people are queuing up for days before the opening to get first look at this brilliant new artist on the scene. He ends up bringing in over a million dollars from his first ever art show.

It's hard to believe, but it really happened, and the film definitely feels like a commentary on how easily something genuine can quickly become co-opted, hyped, and sold to an eager public. The question is, how much of this was engineered by Banksy, and how much of it is just an interesting coincidence that just happened to end up getting filmed?

Once I'd made the connection with Malcolm McLaren in my mind, it was hard to not see clues throughout the film. Banksy's stencil work isn't a million miles removed from the cut 'n' paste détournement of Jamie Reid's work for the Pistols, and Shepard Fairey has routinely used '77 era punk iconography in his own work. Still, McLaren was a master manipulator whose own artistic output didn't live up to his ego. Banksy is an accomplished artist in his own right already; if he *did* create Mr Brainwash, it's hard to see how it would really benefit him.

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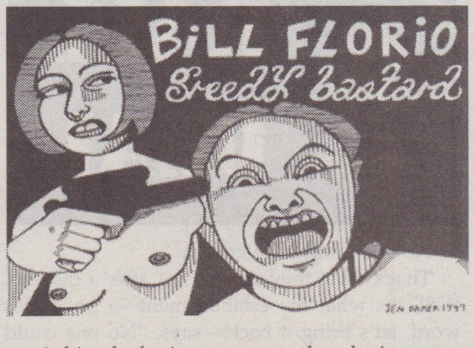
Thought I'd gone for good? I'm back, at least for now.




A friend of mine was recently relaying some of her internet dating horror stories to me. I confessed that I feel like I've never really been on

what most people consider a date. I consider it a date when it's someone you don't really know or someone you just found out may be romantically interested in you, ensuring that some level of awkwardness is present. I've always found the idea of consciously stating that you're formally courting someone to be a really weird and unnatural way to bring on a meaningful relationship. I mean you will spend time alone with someone for some purpose, be it work or just convenience or pure platonic friendship, and you could have a good time doing any of the things you'd do without formally calling it a date. I suppose for that matter two people could be really attracted to each other for years and never instigate anything romantic due to general rejection anxiety, and I'm guessing this is one of the reasons dating came about after the fall of arranged marriages. I still feel that when you ask someone for a formal date, it's almost a challenge that, if this person does not feel a certain level of physical and emotional attraction in a certain amount of time, you cannot bear or bother to have a close social relationship with them. It can be viewed in some way as a duel, some battle for sexual dominance. For this reason, while I've always had good friends of the opposite sex, I can also understand why so many people have settled for the douchebags that have come up and asked them for a date over actual good friends that they fear they could lose if the platonic line were crossed.

This column is not about dating at all. I've been thinking lately how important one's perception of others is more important than the actual reality of any situation. There are two problems about your immediate view of the world:

1. You'll probably look back at right now and see a completely different situation in hindsight than you ever could in the present.

2. Others are probably looking at things very differently than you are. Perhaps in time you'll both look at the past in the same way, but since it'll be too late to fix what was perceived and how actions were taken, your present will always be more important than whatever bullshit you learn from it later.

I'm just going to go over some odd conversations I've had with various people in the past few weeks to expand on this, and as usual I will not make any solid point. Maybe it'll make you think of something. Something that probably has nothing to do with what I was thinking of, but then again, that *would* be the point of all this.

So I was watching Food Network with a friend and she commented that Ted Allen, the host of *Chopped*, is a strange pick for a show host. His manner is very odd, since he comes off as reserved and stiff and totally corny at the same time. I then explained that he was originally on *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, and he served as the *stiff* to counterbalance the *completely flaming*. After understanding this, Ted's mannerisms suddenly seemed to fit, whereas if you think of him as the straight white male talk show host like every other on television he seems totally unqualified and discomforting. As the very reserved gay guy, he seems like a very competent host. This sounds totally like a double standard, and almost wrong to say, but I think most people will have to admit that their internal prejudices work in Ted's favor regardless of one's own gender/sexual orientation.

I was at work a few weeks ago and someone talked about seeing Goldie Hawn walking around. I commented that I was not a big fan of her daughter. My coworker said something like, "What about *Almost Famous*? I love that movie." I commented that I was completely disappointed by that movie because it's autobiographical, but everything's been changed to make sure no one who's still alive could ever be offended, a total wuss move. She had no idea what I was talking about, and she had never seen *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. After I lent her a copy of the movie and she saw what Cameron Crowe was capable of in goofing on non-famous high school kids he wrote about, her enthusiasm for *Almost Famous* tended to be much less than it was when she thought it was just pure fiction. This goes for a lot of film adaptations; read any bad Amazon/IMBD review of a really good movie based on a novel and someone's always giving it one star because the filmmakers failed to include some trite meaningless subplot. Oh yeah, *The Godfather* would be such of a better film if it included the vagina-tightening surgery scene!

So getting back to the conversation about bad dates that came out of internet dating sites, here's my thoughts on reasons people would use these sites:

1. You're generally not a good person to date. You have a lot of hang-ups, jealousy and general problems with self-image and self-confidence. Not something you want to share with your current friends on a close level.

2. You've only dated people that fit into category one, and because of this you're either so used to this sort of bad relationship that you feel comfortable continuing new ones, or these relationships have changed you enough to put you into category one as well.

3. Because of other factors or reasons one or two, you don't have any friends that can move into the relationship level, or you may not have any friends at all because your past relationships have centered on complete social domination of one or both parties.

4. You have some severe personality issues, much more than category one. This is probably the reason categories one, two and three exist, and while some people can seek medical help for these disorders, I'd say about eight to ten percent of the general public either enjoy their lack of emotional health or refuse to admit they have a problem. Five dates from the internet have about a 100% return on having to spend an evening with a category four. If you're unlucky enough to be duped into any relationship for an extended time with one of these, you may well be doing internet dating for the rest of your life.

Wow, that's some pretty bleak outlooks from such a cheerful individual, but the truth of the matter is that relationships are hard work. It probably takes a good five years to really get to a level of trust that makes one become healthy, and if you spend all that time only to conclude that you've been fooling yourselves into thinking it's going to work, then you're stuck back at Go. Then again, being good at anything takes a lot of hard work, and most people don't have the patience or fortitude to bring even simple tasks to completion. On the other hand, when it comes to love and emotions, being "good" at it can probably be viewed as being manipulative when viewed by someone who's insecure and has been shit on all their lives. All bringing us back to perception. People have the nerve to say being a math major is difficult and psychology/philosophy is easy, sheesh.

bill@candids.com

# ALL FOREIGN JUNK

It's been a very busy month. School is kicking my ass, but I've also been flat out with music. Aside from finishing the new UV RACE LP and a couple of 7"s, STRAIGHTJACKET NATION have started work on our new 7" and Europe tour plans, and TOTAL CONTROL have just finished off our new 7", too. I also just finished the new issue of *Distort* and some writing for the Melbourne based fanzine *Stained Sheets* which you should check out if you haven't already!

Speaking of *Stained Sheets*, the latest issue had a VENOM P STINGER feature, and VPS are playing a reunion show next weekend in the UK for All Tomorrow's Parties, a couple weeks after SUICIDE and THE STOOGES played on the same night! If you have not yet heard VENOM P STINGER, I'd strongly recommend chasing down the song "Walking About," which was my introduction to the band and an era of Melbourne post-punk music that is littered with fascinating bands like FUNGUS BRAINS.

As for current Melbourne punk music, the EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING *Rush To Relax* LP launch was one of the best shows I've ever been at. It was at a venue with a capacity just short of 2000 people and the place was *full*. SUPER WILD HORSES and UV RACE were the supports. The entire night was just a mindblower from start to finish, but watching them kick into "Which Way To Go" with a room full of chanting rabid fans was exhilarating.

Aside from this, reading a lot of Heidegger has turned my attention back toward German music, particularly a record of creepy synthetic soundscapes by a guy named Reichman called *Wunderbar*. I haven't found much in ancient German punk or hardcore that has grabbed my attention, so any efforts to enlighten me in history would be appreciated. While all this electronic/psychedelic stuff is a real good antidote to the

heaviness of Heidegger, some good German hardcore might make a good compliment once I've deciphered it.

OK, here we go…

THE GRECIAN FANZINE

Fuck, man. Greece is a mess. Money melting, banks burning. I have yet to hear a good Greek hardcore band, let alone a great one. Their language, like German, may be too austere. But drag a couple of anarchist protesters through the streets by their hair on the nightly news and Greek teenagers, gobbling spanakopita and swilling grape juice and out of work and out of school and bored with Plato, may react with some good tunes. It worked in the Britain with the labor strikes and birth of punk, right?

*Mountza*, Greek punk/hardcore fanzine, is up to its fourth issue. I've talked this up in a previous "All Foreign Junk" column. In both Greek and English text, definitely worth a few hours and a couple of sides of a record. The layout is clean and tidy and, surprise, the writing is informed and engaging.

While the majority of fanzine interviews with punk or hardcore bands fail to demand anything from reader or interviewee, *Mountza* manage to make good talk with a couple of respondents. There's a really insightful interview with P. J. Bonneman (from AMDI PETERSENS ARME, GORILLA ANGREB, etc.), who has recently recorded a new record under the name GREEN MANSIONS. Have not heard it yet, but I have faith in this guy to make good music.

The interview with Fenriz of DARKTHRONE was illuminating. The interviewer seems solely focused on accessing Fenriz's encyclopedic knowledge of r'n'r history to make the point that DARKTHRONE are as much a punk band as anything else, a point that I wish people would spend a lot less time making in band interviews. In DARKTHRONE's case, I think they were a better band when they offered no direct allusion to involvement or interest with punk music, and their new records, while acknowledging raw punk as influence, don't sound nearly as unique and otherworldly as tunes like "Skald Au Satans Sol" from *Transylvanian Hunger* do. That song changed the way I heard music, and opened up new roads into bands I already liked like DISCHARGE, to hear them in a new way, and I hadn't really reflected on it too much for a couple of years 'til I read this interview.

To get to my point, and to borrow Fenriz's own words when questioned as to whether DARKTHRONE are black metal: "We aren't really anything… at all. It's a bit like MOTORHEAD in 1979-83. Was it punk? Was it rock? Was it metal? Anyway, who cares… It's raw at least and shows some energy and it's alive!" Finally, Fenriz's playlist of hellish rock 'n' roll is pretty amazing: alongside such stock standards as the ELEVATORS, Jerry Lee or SONICS, he's thrown in tracks by BACHMAN TURNER OVERDRIVE (!!) and Kenny Rogers that I really have got to hear now.

There's also a notable interview with Guillem from DESTINO FINAL, whose LP I will discuss shortly. Guillem is an articulate interview subject, and within he discusses the following: US bands/tour promoters should return the same culinary courtesy to touring European bands as they are offered when touring; Paco runs a good label; the tendency of punk to produce a highly critical conservative cynicism serves as a restriction against anything radical or new. DESTINO FINAL in a nutshell.

Number four also features interviews with BLACK TIME, KID CRASH, LOVE POTION, HUMAN EYE, TRANZISTORS and Sugi, the Japanese punk artist. Look at that list of bands! You probably only like one of them, have heard of another one, etc. Comprehensive.

More shit: huge article on the best records of 2009 done by some kind of obsessive collector with a really broad taste in great fuckin' tunes. Huge article on the best of modern Japanese hardcore. Columns (in Greek). A requiem for *Punk Planet* zine (!). And a review section with a broad sample of modern hardcore, punk, noise and weird music.

*Mountza* is an excellent fanzine, one of the best in the world right now. Attempting to engage readers with a broad range of musical content from hardworking underground musicians and artists, making an effort to engage readers with its design *and* its writing, this is highly recommended.

THE SPANISH RECORD

As promised, but I will make this brief, I finally heard the DESTINO FINAL *Atrapados* LP from last year. Australia is a long way from Spain, my friend. First the LP had to be carried across three different borders by sympathetic punk travelers wanting me to avoid paying premium postage charges from within the EU. In Morocco it was traded for a blob of hashish and my copy ended up in a bazaar, where Sir Richard Bishop was jamming sitar and bean with a couple of snake charmers. He took an eye to it and traded another blob of hashish for it but didn't enjoy it on listen, so he gave it to a young Australian tourist who recognized my name from a note inside the record, brought it home, and traded it for a blob of hashish. And after all that, the record was warped, scratched and covered in tar, so I just braved up and ordered a copy from a local distribution and gave my beat up copy to a local charity who fight against global warming.

So the point is I finally got the record. I've heard a lot of things about this record, from hyperbolic frothing that it represented the apogee of hardcore music on vinyl in 2009 to complaints that it developed little from the template INVASION had established from emulating a million other bands. I'm more drawn to the former frothing than the pissweak complaining, and I'm a little disappointed it took me so long to hear this. So, in case you have not heard of it (where are you living, in fuckin' *Australia?!*) or have not yet heard it (ditto), here's the deal: very well-informed recording and production, sizzling guitar feedback and cavernous punk drums characterize a handful of hardcore tunes inspired by '90s Japanese hardcore and worldwide DISCHARGE dicksuck of the last decade. One of the best hardcore records I've heard in a while. Well, that is, since…

THE FINNISH RECORD

I spilled a few words on the merits of Finnish hardcore band KIELTOLAKI a couple columns back, as their two 7"s on Moo Cow were some of the best in modern hardcore. Really vicious and stark hardcore, remember? Well, Feral Ward have done the world another favor and have released a killer new LP called *Masshypnoosi*. I don't know a word of Finnish, but my instinct tells me it's probably a type of bird native to their area.

But seriously, let's consider this LP for a second. While Japanese hardcore bands like GAUZE would probably be the most direct reference point—it's not too fast to be kicked into thrash or hyper-speed hardcore, but still offers the illusion of manic pace with rapid tempo changes as opposed to manic playing, and the songs are structured with little influence from the mid-paced street stomping of US bands—I think these guys were probably listened to a lot of DISCHARGE and the first wave of US bands that did a great job capturing their formula and credos. I picture the AGNOSTIC FRONT/CRUCIFIX flier most nights when trying to beat my brain into the submission of sleep, and this flier could probably represent best where KIELTOLAKI are coming from. Tightly structured, noisy guitar solos, barked vocals, outraged tone, distorted but with plenty of bottom end. Great hardcore music.

If you play punk, hardcore, garage noise or any music with a bit of grit and rawness to it, or if you write a fanzine that loosely covers the same sonic territory, and you *don't* live in the US, Japan or Sweden, please get in touch. My address is Daniel Stewart: PO Box 239/North Carlton Victoria 3054/Australia.

## TRY HARDER

by Ariel Awesome

It took less than a year for me to fully embrace my new LA lifestyle. How do I know? I'm wearing a leather jacket and flip-flops. Really. I am perplexed as to how this transformation (with some side effects I may or may not find objectionable: I mean, flip-flops?) came about without me noticing, but it happened, it actually happened: I love LA.

OK, suspend your disbelief for a moment please. The caricature of LA that you are conjuring in your head right now is blonde, tan, self-obsessed, plastic, fake, false and vapid, a vision of gaudy glamour and decadence on rollerblades. Right? But like any two-dimensional representation, any reduction, it leaves out the ugly and the complicated, which are, to me, the good parts. The LA I am coming to know is the much more complex and wild animal, a gilded theatre of the absurd, married to a vast sprawling decayed beast, full of good bad and weird aspects.

When I left Los Angeles at thirteen I thought "good fucking riddance." It seemed like a shitty wasteland to me then, all strip malls and bros.

Like most teens, I wanted to be anywhere but the place I grew up. I embraced Northern California as the natural superior to my flawed beginnings. Over time all the punks I knew here died, moved away, turned into squares or just slipped out of my life. I lost touch with LA punk completely. With memories of being beaten up by Riverside knuckle girls and being called a femi-nazi countless times being fresh, I wasn't sad to see the connection fade.

Even though it's only a six-hour drive away, every tour I ever went on tried and failed to get a show in LA. Anyone we knew who did get a show told us stories of disappointing or actively shitty shows. Most of this time I knew more punks in Omaha than LA (in this scenario I consider San Pedro its own distinct colony of punkitude).

I moved here last year promising myself it was temporary, that I could get through it, and if I couldn't, I could always run back to Berkeley. I never even entertained the thought I would like it, let alone love it.

The Raw Ponx have played a big part in my turn around of feelings for this city. I haven't felt excitement course through a scene with such intensity, with such sense of possibility, in a long time. Bands like Tuberculosis, Rayos X, Poliskitzo and Mata Mata make me feel like I'm seeing the beginning of something, the opening credits to a revolution. The air is electric at these shows. Bands this good, a scene this close-knit would be enough to be stoked on, but they do so much more. A distro, a record label, a print and video zine, screen printing and real political involvement and activism in their community. In their own words: "All these resources and projects are things that we fight for and build together. As young people of color in a police state, we need the means to define ourselves, our struggles, and determine a future in this 'no future' system!" I can't help but feel inspired and energized just by being around them. If you want to know more, check it: http://www.myspace. com/rawponxla (real website coming soon, I hear).

With an electric and inspirational scene and good friends to share it with, the rest of LA seems full of possibility too. I find myself devoting my time to finding 24-hour tacos, vegan deliciousness, cool old relics of buildings and tencent coffee, and exploring neighborhoods I've never heard of before. It isn't just glitz and shallow celebrity culture; there is an old city of coffee joints, burnout bars, bizarre architecture, natural desert beauty, Chicano history, overpass murals and all kinds of things I never bothered to look for until now.

I'm scared of the ocean, and I'm not a very good swimmer. Naturally, I started surfing. Actually, a very rad punk lady friend here got me into the idea of trying and, being the least athletic blob I know, I suck at it, but it is fun anyway. Letting the wind blow on my hairy legs. Getting all salty. Checking out dolphins. Sharing sand with families, punks and sun-drunk hobos while letting the radio bust some tunes with rad punk friends. And doing all that while most people have to work. It's maybe the best thing I can think of.

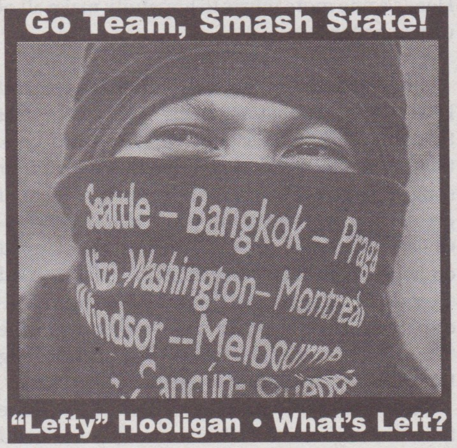
I'm not blinded by my new appreciation; there are still things I hate about life here. Car culture feels wrong, and there is a jockish machismo that permeates even the punk scene. I hate hearing punks call things "gay" and tease each other almost to anger with the word "faggot." I hate big guys who pride themselves on throwing smaller punks on the floor to get their macho ya-yas out. They can go ahead and call me PC, blame it on the Bay Area, whatever, but there is some shit I refuse to let go.

I miss a scene steeped in queer-punk culture. I miss fast easy public transportation. I miss clean air. And I miss a lot of dear friends.

But in retrospect, I was too complacent in the Bay; things were too easy. It is a well-mapped and supported scene, full of too many people who've seen it all, who can sometimes coalesce into a jaded unexcitable mass. It feels good to be in uncharted territory again, to be among the excited, with people who, when they hear their song ringing out, dance in a frenzy.

My teenage self might be disappointed in me, but I've just got to tell her that every city has its moments in time when it is awesome. Right now, for me, it is LA.

*What city is really on fire for you right now? What about it makes you wanna make things, do things, try things? All correspondence to: arielawesome@gmail. com or general delivery Los Angeles, California.*




It's harder and harder for me to get on an airplane these days and fly.

Not because of potential Icelandic volcano eruptions or suicide Islamic extremist attacks. Nor is it because of enervating airport security or a personal fear of flying. No, it's that I'm running out of authors I can count on for a quick, distracting read during the flight.

Airports and airplanes are dull and boring at best, so it helps to have a mindless piece of genre fiction handy, for a diversion. By genre, I mean formulaic. I'm a fan of only a few types of genre fiction—science fiction and mystery—and for whatever reason, only mystery fiction appeals to me when I fly. Unfortunately, I like only a limited number of mystery writers, and lately, they've been dying on me.

I stop in at Compass Books flying out of SFO. It's a pretty good bookstore, part of the local Books Inc chain, with a wide variety of magazines and newspapers as well. No snacks or knickknacks, just plenty of print. I usually make a beeline for the mystery section and grab the latest by Tony Hillerman, Walter Mosley, or Robert Parker. Hillerman and Mosley could always be depended upon to produce a new book every year. Parker was the most prolific. He had three separate detective protagonists (Spenser, Jesse Stone, Sunny Randall), and did a couple of Raymond Chandler/Philip Marlowe sequels.

Parker died at the beginning of this year. Tony Hillerman, creator of Navajo detectives Leaphorn and Chee, died in 2008. Walter Mosley is alive and well, and after killing off his most popular detective, Easy Rollins, he's started another series around Leonid McGill. Mosley dabbles in science fiction, and fiction like *The Man in My Basement*, but his meager annual output, even supplemented by potential posthumous Parkers, doesn't offer much of a selection when it comes to taking my mind off an impending plane flight.

Tony Hillerman once commented: "I am 82 years old. I imagine that I will keep on writing as long as anyone wants to keep reading." If only this could have been so. Writers we enjoy create unique worlds, populate them with engaging characters, and sustain both through engrossing adventures that allow us to momentarily lose ourselves. They needn't write literature, just something that entertains.

Now I have to find new writers, and fresh detective series, to be enthusiastic about. Always hit and miss. I've followed other mystery writers in the past—Rex Stout, James McClure, Cara Black—though not as religiously as Parker, Hillerman or Mosley. Still others, like Sara Paretsky or Sue Grafton, never really panned out. On a recent trip to Las Vegas, I took a chance with *The Crime Writer* by Gregg Hurwitz and was pleasantly preoccupied. So it's a pain when I've read an author's output and they up and die on me.

**PERSONAL PROPAGANDA...** To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@mac.com.

**I've had enough of all this shit...**

I was driving home not too long ago and had the iPod on shuffle. One of my favorite DILLINGER FOUR songs came on, that being "The Great American Going Out Of Business Sale," from the *Midwestern Songs Of The Americas* album. I've listened to that album literally a few

hundred times, a lot more than any record in the past twenty years. That's even after getting tired of nearly every band that could be described as "melodic punk." What makes this D4 record so special is the quality of the songwriting—the songs are incredibly catchy and memorable, more than just about any I've heard over the past two decades. The lyrics are equally incredible. They "say something" without resorting to clichés or humorlessness/stridency. It's a progressive sociopolitical agenda they have but it's put across in an observational sense, life from the barstool, taking note of people in their day-to-day lives. A band could just say "work sucks" and leave it at that, but D4, on "Super Powers Enable Me To Blend In With Machinery," tell the story of a woman riding on the bus to a job she obviously hates, lamenting the fact that the buses, with their plastic seats, aren't as nice as they used to be, and then throwing out the line "the only good boss is one that's dead." Now that might actually *be* a cliché but it's her observation, not necessarily a slogan. The chorus rejoinder? "Fuck 'em all!" But it's the *happiest* sounding "fuck 'em all" imaginable.

But that wasn't even the song I was referencing, was it? Back to "Great American." That song more or less epitomizes everything I love about the band and about when punk actually says something I can relate to. It's a sad tale, in a way; a rumination about life in general—homelessness, racism, religion, shitty jobs (again). Freedom being a "privilege of hatred guaranteed" and "compassion just a second thought of hope brought to its knees." Maybe it's just me, but those words come to mind when thinking about the idiotic "tea baggers" (i.e. tea party activists who have sucked the corporate-backed propaganda fed to them) who get brainwashed into thinking that selfishness is a virtue, that providing for other people is going to lead this country down the road to socialism, nazism, totalitarianism. God forbid someone can get free or affordable health insurance. I've riffed on it before (a few months ago, in fact) so there's no need to do it anymore. The song continues with a story about an army buddy of the storyteller's father who allowed the Pentagon to "trade him checks for both his legs" and whose world outlook became "fuck the states."

The best comes at the end, though—these words are worth printing in their entirety: "I have eyes that see/I have a mind that thinks/I have a mouth that speaks/and goddamn it will/Because I've had enough of all this shit about 'making do,' 'playing ball,' 'the way things are' and 'dealing with it.'" Then there's a line they steal from Billy Bragg about "mixing pop and politics" and it concludes with "and I'll die the day I find that I'm fucking useless!" It then fades into a recording of "Taps" that was taken from a Girl Scout sing-along record.

I'm definitely sick of all that shit. I woke up with a nasty headache this morning, no doubt partially due to an emotional hangover from yesterday when I found out I'm going to have to fork over another $2000 or so to my dentist next month to finish an implant and then get a new crown. It's my own damned fault because I don't wear the nightguard that was supposed to protect me from my grinding that I've done since I was a kid and my teeth are basically trashed. But it's too uncomfortable so I've been paying the price. On top of that I got hit with a $405 bill from my former physical therapist, who I saw as a follow-up to my shoulder surgery. That's because of the $1500 deductible from our motherfucking new insurance carrier, forced on Ellen at her work and for which we pay way too much to begin with. $80 a session for half an hour of him twisting around my arm, having me pull some rubber bands and do some stretching. What a racket.

So I'm not willing to suffer fools today, or any other day for that matter. I figured I deserved a nice breakfast so I headed to the local Dunkin Donuts (one of about ten in a two mile radius—I'm only half joking) to get myself an iced coffee and bagel. There was a table with three elderly white gentlemen and I overheard their discussion about "illegal aliens." That makes my skin crawl. And it seems as though every Dunks in the area has a table of white guys spouting ignorant rhetoric. It must be some kind of company policy or state regulation.

Singing that D4 song probably ain't going to do anything except make me feel better but yelling "I've had enough of all this shit" accomplishes that, to an extent. Better strained vocal cords than murdering someone, right?
Here's some more music to hopefully make all of us feel better…

*****

I hadn't heard of the early '80s San Jose band EXECUTIONER before, likely due to the fact that they didn't have any vinyl releases back then. Patac Records has rectified that with a four song 7" recorded in 1983. An inspired tandem of gnarled punk, thrash and some metallic-meets-Cheetah Chrome guitar flourishes and topped off with some raspy, psychotic vocals. A good alternating of mid-speed moodiness and quicker-paced bursts. Hard to believe this sat in the "vaults" (or someone's closet) for such a long time. (www.patacrecords.com)

Also from the "vaults" and around the same time frame is an LP collection by Toronto band THE YOUNG LIONS. The material comes from a series of demos and tape compilations. Sound quality is quite rough at times but the hooks of these songs burn through, from the incredibly catchy "Things Are Gonna Change" and "United" to the almost post-punkish "Pray For Julie" on the bonus 7". THE YOUNG LIONS dabbled in hardcore from time to time but mainly played anthemic, fist-pumping '77-tinged punk with "political" lyrics touching on the issues of the day—"Young Amerikkka," "National Security," "Defy The State," etc. On the back cover, they state: "We had ideas. We wanted to change the world." I imagine quite a few of us did back then and some still do although my statements in the earlier part of this column probably indicate a much more cynical attitude about things. (Schizophrenic, 17 W. 4th St., Hamilton, ON L9C 3M2, Canada, www.schizophrenicrex.com)

The last "archival" review is Bridge Nine's repress of the debut UNDERDOG 7" EP, originally released in '86. A faithful reproduction of Sean Taggart's cover artwork and the sound is a bit brighter than on the sonically muddy original pressing. Burning hardcore that encompassed speed and a mid-to-fast paced groove as well as some catchy songwriting. The standout—and the best UNDERDOG song, in my opinion—remains "Say It To My Face," a timeless, confrontational anthem for the shit-talkers, wrapped up in a floor-pounding chorus, and the bonus beats at the end add a distinct twist. (119 Foster St., Building 4, Floor 3, Peabody, MA 01960, www.bridge9.com)

Local Cross are quickly becoming one of my favorite labels, releasing music that challenges, that provokes with more than a modicum of originality. The latest 7" from the BILL BONDSMEN proves that point. The BONDSMEN have never been a predictable band but they push things in a new direction here. That sometimes sets off alarm bells but it shouldn't be the case in this instance. Two lengthier songs this time out—"Disaster Prone" matches Tony's ranting vocal with a jabbing guitar line and bashing offbeat drumming that also adds more complex rhythms. "The 36th" mainly operates in an early '80s post-punk realm, atmospherics and a percolating undertow setting the table for a powerful burst of rage towards the end. There's a darkness, an ominousness with these songs.

Also on Local Cross is a two song 7" by GG KING. That might be a cringe worthy moniker but, hey, what's wrong with paying tribute to DEE DEE KING—you know, Dee Dee Ramone's embarrassingly bad solo project? Thankfully, that's the only connection. There are a couple of CARBONAS involved and songs here provide some decent garage rock, especially the bashing B-side "Insomnia." His (their?) demo wasn't bad either, particularly the cover of the BOX TOPS' "The Letter." (www.localcross.com)

*Spineless Wonders*, a posthumous release from the late, great Boston band THE CONVERSIONS finally sees the light of day (it was recorded in 2007). THE CONVERSIONS were one of the more interesting and talented bands to come out of this area in recent years. The speed and thorniness of hardcore, but with all the odd time shifts in the drumming (not much 4/4 here) and tension between the instruments there was much post-punkish flair. Terry Cuozzo's angry, acidic vocals meshed perfectly with the innovative music and they were always evolving without moving into any sort of pretentious realm. The lengthy "Cause and Effect" really pushes things, a mesh of martial drumming, deconstructive guitar and bass damage. If that sounds too artsy for some of you, it's really not the case. (6 Wadleigh Place, Boston, MA 02127, www.ridethesnakerecords.com)

Something *really* interesting and "different" comes courtesy of a two song 7" by CLAW TOE, a mysterious project masterminded by Criminal IQ honcho Darius Hurley, whose vocals convey pure deviancy. How to describe the musical contents? "Ingrown Ego" has a sinister ambiance and the production is muffled and

claustrophobic. Using *Metal Box*-era PIL and CHROME as starting points (sorta), the guitar lines have an alien vibe, accompanied by deeply buried bass and even more deeply buried mechanized beats. "Girl," meanwhile, has brighter production, electronic rhythms and a HELIOS CREED-type acid bath guitar tone. In other words, this side really *does* sound quite a bit like CHROME. Offbeat and highly engaging. (Criminal IQ, 3057 N Rockwell 2nd Floor Chicago, IL 60618, www.criminaliq.com)

In the no-bullshit hardcore department, MUCH WORSE's EP, *Proper Execute*, really grabs my ear. That's not easy to do with the glut of retro hardcore records clogging distro boxes and other methods of distribution. This is merciless, pillaging hardcore punk without let-up. It's something in the production that pushes it over. It's loud, it's got plenty of rawness and "oomph," for want of a better term. It has the same effect as when I heard NIGHTSTICK JUSTICE or STRAIGHTJACKET NATION for the first time. Here are bands that don't hold back, don't sound tentative—it's just pure burn. (www.passjudgementrecords.com)

The second, self-titled EP from Toronto miscreants the SCHOOL JERKS possesses an early BLACK FLAG/west coast punk fervor and the vocals are venomously spat out in an abrasive ranting cadence colliding against the taut, no bullshit musical delivery. There are a couple of ex-TERMINAL STATE guys in this band and they're rougher and less catchy but it maintains a back-to-basics appeal. (www.cowabungarecords.com)

UDI prove with their one-sided 12" *Unidentified Drunken Incident* that sometimes boys just wanna thrash. Fast fast fast hardcore punk going full tilt over the course of these fourteen songs, including a splendid cover of RAW POWER's "Fuck Authority," although I have to admit I miss the cowbell from the original. Vocalist Mike Ratt lets the words fly—it's amazing how he's able to sing without taking much of a breath on these songs. I imagine not a lot of you ever heard of the underrated San Diego band the NEIGHBORS, but these guys bring 'em to mind, both in terms of the speed and Mr. Ratt's phlegmy vocal delivery. This has a mid-'80s vibe, when hardcore had been around for a bit but there were bands sticking with the tried and true formula. That's the case on this 2010 release and it's still highly enjoyable to these ears. (PO Box 887, Warren, MI 48090, www.spidercuddler.com)

And finally, GERM ATTACK have unleashed their third album for the punx, *Cruxshadow*. When reviewing an album by a band with a few releases under its proverbial belt, it's a cliché to say, "It's their best album yet." A lot of the time that's complete bullshit, but it's really true here. GERM ATTAK started off as a so-so assimilation of CHAOS UK/DISCHARGE/et al but they've tightened up and refined their sound over time. Yes, it remains pure early '80s UK worship and you can easily pick out where they're borrowing from GBH (first song, "Life In Exile," is more than a bit like "No Survivors") and there are also echoes of THE PARTISANS, THE EXPLOITED and ABRASIVE WHEELS. The latter band's "Vicious Circle" certainly inspired "Public Enemy Number One" and there's even some IRON MAIDEN-esque guitar trills to close that song out. OK, I'm saying GERM ATTAK are derivative as all hell but it's not so much about originality as it is about whether they make it sound fresh and vibrant. *Cruxshadow* fits that description and, yes, it *is* their best album yet. (PO Box 3067, Albany, NY 12203, www.loudpunk.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, suburbanvoice@earthlink.net

I have my fair share of moral dilemmas, most of which involve maybe a girl or stealing from somebody or some shit, but this one was different. I've never claimed to be a saint. I've done some really shitty things. I've fucked some people over throughout the course of my life, but man, I really don't know what to do this time. Giving a fuck about most people is not my strong suit. Being selfish is definitely my main characteristic. Still, I can't help but wonder, am I about to literally take the food out of a starving baby's mouth?

New York City is a wild place. All the bars stay open 'til 4 am. My bullshit dirtbag charm still works on the ladies, and I don't get judged for sporting my huge diamond chain bearing my own likeness. (That was actually an easy one. I just took a big Jesus pendant and painted the hair and beard red. Take that, Martha Stewart!)

I'm running out of money, and the longer I stay out of Austin, the work is becoming less and less frequent. Needless to say I'm starting to freak out a bit. The thought of having to get a real job and stay in one place is just not an option. Mr. Worrell can't be bothered with such things. My friend Beth told me once that when she was in NYC for a while she went down and applied for emergency food stamps. According to Beth, it was no big deal. Plus, hey man, we're the punks, food should be free. Didn't The Mob say that? I don't know, man. Anyway, I said, "Why the fuck not?" and headed down to the food stamp office.

I put on my scummiest shirt, a pair of filthy pants (with a patch over the crotch, duh) and two mismatched penny loafers. Not that it was a huge stretch, but I wanted to make sure that I looked the part. I had already made a shopping list and got my derelict looking ass on the bus headed south. The place looked miserable, kinda like the castle the Princess was in before Shrek came to rescue her from the dragon. The office smelled like piss and all the employees were honestly kinda mean and cold, which I guess has something to do with the New York state of mind, I wouldn't know. Where I'm from we are nice to people, so whatever. I waited in line for about five minutes behind a woman with about forty kids and was eventually directed towards an elevator that was to take me to the fourth floor. The elevator had a back wall that was covered with mirrored glass. Most of the glass was broken with the remnants still lying on the floor of the elevator and what was still intact had been completely covered with bad graffiti, such as "fuck you," and of course "tits."

Once outside the waiting room, I was directed to the waiting area where I sat for about three hours. At first I was actually looking forward to the people watching, which I admit is pretty sick, but after about five minutes, I didn't like it anymore. I just felt kinda cheap and super bummed. CNN was on the cracked TV, every seat was filled with crying babies and it was hot as a motherfucker. Finally, and I mean finally, my number was called. My case worker's name was Ms. Richards. She seemed to be a nice enough lady, and judging from the photographs lining her cubical in, let me reiterate, an awful fucking building, she seemed to be a member of the Nation of Islam or at least connected to it, which perhaps due to my own ignorance or general lack of exposure to it, caught me off guard. Ms. Richards didn't seem to give two shits about me. Maybe anyone, for that matter. Maybe she saw through my bullshit, or maybe she'd been doing this job for too goddamn long and was just looking to cash a check. Either way, I apparently said the right things. After talking for about three minutes, I was shooed off to another room to have my picture taken for my benefits card and that was that. I was referred to another building where I was to pick up the actual card. I now was able to buy upwards of 200 dollars worth of groceries a month, excluding toiletries. I walked out of the second building, kneeled down to get my iPod and Blackberry outta my bag and was on my way back to where I'm staying. If memory serves, the first thing I put on my iPod was Crass. If that ain't a kick in the dick, I don't know what is. All of a sudden it kinda just hit me. Here I am in a city where people actually need a whole lot of fucking help and my privileged white ass rolls into town and gets 200 bones a month no fucking problem. For some reason it made me feel like shit.

Now I'm sitting here, benefits card in hand, trying to figure out what to do. Maybe this is like a fucked up test or something. Maybe this is what will determine whether or not I'm a decent human being. *FFFFFFFFFUUUUU-UUCCCCC-CCCKKKKKKKK TTTTTTHHHHHHAAA AATTTTTT.* After further research, like a any good journalist would, I found out that I wasn't actually taking money away from starving babies. I wasn't a part of the problem. I stole all the cool shit that I have anyway. I look great on my food stamp ID card and I can't wait to buy some food with it. I talked to some people in the punk community that I really value and they gave me their opinion.

I am really glad that I took some time and thought about what I was doing. I'm probably

still one of the worst people on the planet, but at least I will no longer be the hungriest. I'm an artist. I got shit to do. This is why this country is great. Love it or leave it.

Opinions are like arseholes: those who claim not to have one are usually full of shit. There's a wonky aphorism that I just made up, but wait a minute…

Not that controversial, but I'm pretty into people having opinions. Like, proper ones. I think debate, lively discussion, and disagreement are bloody super. I reckon it's productive; stimulating argument is as exciting and as enriching, if not more so, than the buzzy feeling of totally agreeing with someone. I'm talking about spats away from the easy drama of the message board. I've been reading old issues of *MRR* and a bunch of accounts of this rag's legendary status as opinion-former/breaker/battleground. There's a nice full circle, then, in resurrecting that difficult tradition and giving some people an extended right-to-reply in this here column.

Not that many UK bands are featured in *MRR*, but not that many UK bands are any good. Mob Rules are based in Leeds, England, and play great, thunderous, heavily dynamic hardcore, but you might not have got that from their recent interview, a platform as it was for some of their more esoteric channels of verbal witticism. Conor, the drummer, is a funny man. He and I have disagreed in the aforementioned manner a few times before, as anyone who remembers the last time he said, "I literally have no idea why girls would like hardcore" can attest. See? Such a card! Anyway, his musing about Wales, including some comments about how it's "five years behind" intrigued me—not because it was ill informed, although I think it was, but because it was both funny and dismissive at the same time. Being funny and dismissive at the same time is interesting. It's an often unconscious social tactic, we all do it, and it is clever and, in a way, dangerous. Why? Well, think about how many times you've been lost for words because someone's said something you're not into, but everyone laughed. The only space it leaves for those who disagree is one where they're easily dismissible, again, as either humorless jerks, or overly-PC, or femi-nazis, or just *not getting it*, or whatever reactionary reduction works depending on the argument in question. These universal forms of dismissive humor end up the polar opposite of the buzzy awesomeness of open debate I mentioned above. It's the ultimate shutdown.

In a similar vein is the outcome of my column-before-last when I wrote about girl bands and London, lazily using a mesh of different observations out of context, to basically be a bit scathing. I had a point but I think I buried it. Suffice to say it pissed off a number of people, some of whom wrote to me or got in touch in other ways, but through the magic of communication we all pretty much got to an understanding, even if it was agreeing to opposition. This included one friend who recognized an experience I'd had watching her band in there. I was ashamed of myself as it was only a semi-conscious inclusion, but, moreover, for me to write about the dire need for challenging our own representation whilst effectively putting words in another girl's mouth… well, sucks to be me on that one. Sure, we can all admit to an ill-judged turn of phrase—I hope I definitely did then—but it's especially easier if you're not starting from a position of supposed untouchability. All too often I see this: no room to debate because opinion is predicated on that kind of liberal nihilism that has come to the fore in some punks' attitudes. This, of course, is a world away from Mob Rules (their singer is perhaps the most switched-on person I know) but it's an attitude that's all too prevalent, I'm sure you know someone who's working this steez, or trying. It's the ultimate shutdown to any kind of ideological challenge, a boring, bland brick wall that has no space of possibility or change or *fuck yeah!* or *fuck no!* about it, just pure *nothing matters* or worse still an insinuation that somehow to think that you *can* affect your own environment is so horrifically behind the curve that its actually sort of embarrassing the person you're challenging to the point where they're cringing. It's a hopeless language without any words, all shrugs and sibilants, and it's everywhere. I blame the hipster media conspiracy, but that's another story. Critical thought isn't a hangover from the '90s, fer chrissakes. Okay, some chumps didn't do their research and it became part of a bigger cliché, but aren't we over the backlash from that yet? Calling *bullshit* is badass, and I hope to god it becomes *cool* again, or otherwise, hey, when the context of this new-found nonchalance is lost, as it doubtless quickly will be, we might just find we've all ended up back in the Wetherspoons* School of interpersonal politics with the dickheads from school and someone's racist, wasted uncle. Bummer, no?

Back to the topic of that throwaway comment about the punk scene in Wales. It's a small country, part of the UK, and traditionally, i.e. in all sketchy comedy or tabloid press, lampooned for being *backwards* and inbred. This brought up some interesting ideas, not least the issue of what it might mean to reproduce mainstream cultural prejudice, even casual racism (same goes for classism) in punk. This is where everyone screams, "God, she really can't take a joke!" but roll with me here… Of course I'm not saying I would lay those crimes at the friendly feet of Mob Rules. However, as I was incapable of leaving my thoughts on this to remain only a dissatisfied tut, I thought I would include my fellow countrymen, and ask Alex B.

Alex B has been putting on DIY gigs in two cities in South Wales for eight years or so under various banners. He's been fucked over plenty of times, lost money, put on hundred of bands (including Mob Rules) and has been instrumental in literally building the community there from the ground up. Again, this may be all rose-tinted because I learnt everything I needed to know from finding out what that metaphorical cover song was and trading tapes at his early gigs. Not enough girls around and that's still a problem, and was part of the reason I left, but still, for all the bad metal and the basketball vests of the earlier days, those gigs are part of the reason I am here, for better or worse jamming Biohazard as hard as Delta 5. Anyway, objectivity here is impossible due to my irrational, weird, slightly shameful pride in the hillside, but the idea of being *behind* in terms of punk trends is an interesting thing to be brought up, I think. Especially coming from an interview with what has come to be the closest band England has to *mysterious guy hardcore* (due to no engineering of their own, I might add). Hardcore punk in South Wales has endured *lean years* like you wouldn't believe, as lifers like Welly Artcore could sagely tell you. For me, it has a certain kind of specificity that, yeah, probably did once come out of being slightly removed from touring circuits of bigger bands and whatnot, but since I was a teenager has had a lot to do with a thriving scene that is insular in a good way; not without problems of course, but with a dedicated venue which *gets* DIY that many other towns don't have (Le pub in Newport, although R.I.P TJ's, where I and many others cut their teeth metaphorically and physically). Should we all attend to the hype train and the cyclical trends of hardcore punk that can basically be boiled down to whether people in other parts of the country are choosing to display or hide their Youth of Today records this month? I say no. Alex puts all this better than me…

**MRR: Hi Alex, how's it going?**

CCHC: Good thanks, just enjoying Cardiff City FC making the playoffs, another reason for the English to hate the Welsh and all that. Ha.

**MRR: How do you respond to the charge that hardcore punk in south Wales is five years behind the rest of the UK?**

CCHC: All hardcore is backwards anyway. Like, if you are honest, when was the last time you truly heard something original and new in hardcore punk? It doesn't really work like that. What our friend Conor and his Northern buddies actually mean is five years ago, the North was the cool place to be. At that point, the whole Dead & Gone Records, straight edge, youth crew thing was simply the *in thing*. But then if you go back three more years, it was the Canterbury scene, and bands like xCanaanx, November Coming Fire and whoever else. I suppose you could just say that right now, it's been South Wales's time. Kids look to us for what's good and that's awesome, because seven or eight years ago Wales was a bit of a joke. Maybe because we are Welsh and differ to all the aforementioned scenes (we'll never have a big straight edge or vegan interest for instance)

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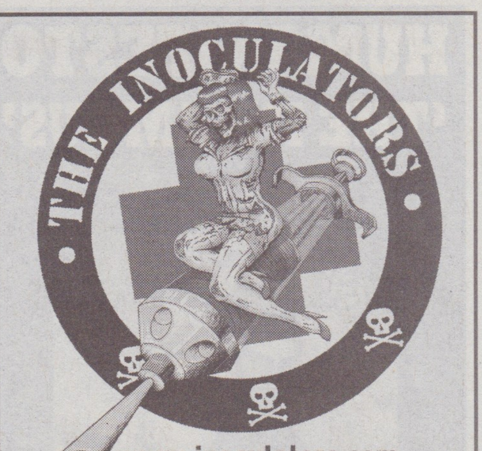


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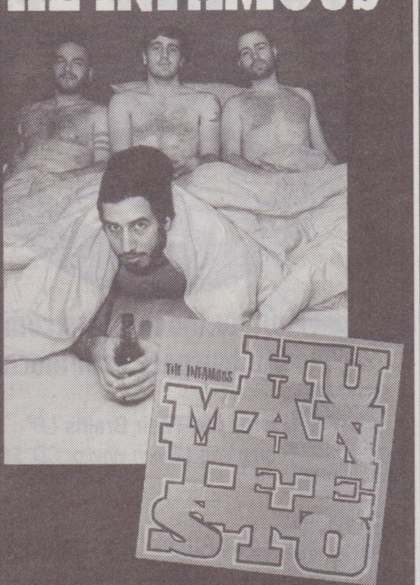


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to some people we still are a joke. But I can assure you it's just misguided jealousy. And in a few more years it'll be exactly the same somewhere else.

**MRR: Does it matter? And what should people check out from Wales to prove or disprove this?**

CCHC: To be honest, no, it doesn't matter. I don't need to start selling people the good and bad of Welsh hardcore punk here. If you like what we've been doing awesome, and if you don't that's fine too. But at least give it a chance instead of creating some preconceived notion of what it's about. At the end of the day it's just music, it isn't something to be intellectualized to death or something to be treated with such elitism. Come and check out a show at Le pub in Newport, you'll be treated to a much friendlier and fun hardcore show atmosphere than a local show in say, I don't know, Leeds.

**MRR: So, is it bad to support your friend's bands or like a band more based on where they come from?**

CCHC: Maybe I missed the point of hardcore somewhere along the line—but isn't that partially the idea? You know, the whole self-containment thing. Friends and likeminded people with a common interest supporting each other's bands, zines, labels and so on? Did DC hate New York because all those kids supported each other's projects? Then again, if some of my friends recorded some crap demo, I'd tell them it was crap. It is possible to be alert to what's good and what's bad, even when it involves your friends. It's just funnily, in recent years, South Wales has been quite good at getting things right.

Alex had some more to say than can be summarized for reasons of space in an invitation to check out some bands and shows, which can be done here: myspace.com/cardiffhype.In conclusion, Mob Rules, Wales Rules, everyone's happy.

While we're on the subject of current or recent Welsh bands, there is more than just the straight up hardcore vein going on and it is once again underrated and of beastly good quality. We've just come back from a tour with Facel Vega, from Porthcawl, which is a little further west than Cardiff, who sound like the best parts of Rites of Spring mixed with Born Against. I also have to mention The Take who split up three years ago, on April 4th 2007 I think. I remember the date because I would find out that at the very moments I was watching their last show, my then-boyfriend was doing the do (the old *in-out*, the rudes, etc., etc.) on someone that wasn't me. So their LP, *Dolomite,* which I was carrying back on the Megabus home when he called to say so, had such bad associations for such a long time that I even considered throwing it out. That would have been a total boon for my doorstep rubbish collection man, cos even without resonance, the lyrics and riffs with this band are singularly incredible. It has bits of a lot of the angular later DC stuff like Bluetip or Jawbox and reminds me in places of Samiam in the pointed sadness of the vocals, but with a slight trace of a Cardiff accent! Just brilliant DIY indie rock with massive angry choruses. I think you can even still get it from Bombed Out records—nice proof that not all Northern initiatives can't hack the Welsh!—try www.bombed-out.com. Also check out Harbour, The Keep, Bedford Falls, Threat Manifesto and Saturday's Kids.

*Oh, non-Brits, you could substitute Wetherspoons, a well-known chain of cheap pubs, for any Sports bar, I think.

PS: I typed the words "Baby, Baby, Baby, won't you come to me as a horse?" at the beginning of this column as it came out of my speakers—misheard "Sacred Love" by Bad Brains of course, and hoped to include it in all its ridiculousness somehow. Now this column is all over, word-count-load all shot, and it's stayed irrelevant, but I can't bring myself to delete, so here it shall stay, in honor of HR's lovely payphone timbre, a voice so great as to persuade even the strictest non-animal lover to join some fantasy legion of Lower East Side Horse Fanciers... I'm tired. What a bunch of nonsense. One love.
bryonybeynon@gmail.com / bigtakeover.co.uk

I realize that this is a music column, so I'll keep the politics short. Fuck Arizona, fuck SB1070 and fuck anybody who complains about "illegal" immigrants and then sits down to a meal consisting of fruits, vegetables and meats that were all picked, processed and kept affordable by the exploitation of the labor those very migrants provided. You can't have it both ways, assholes. Either stop living off the fruits of their labor or recognize that people who come to this country to work provide American society with a huge net benefit. End the exploitation, end the ICE raids and reform the immigration process now! In the meantime, boycott the fuck out of Arizona. Not just by avoiding the state, but companies based in AZ as well. You can find a comprehensive list at http://www.arizona-boycott.org/. Sorry, I had to get that off my chest.

In punker news, AXEWIELD have finally followed up their demo with not one but *two* new releases. Crust War put out a 12" entitled *Wisdom of Doom* and Hardcore Kitchen released the *War Machine* CD. I have to admit I passed on the CD (yep, total vinyl snob) but the 12" is a rager with the kind of quality one expects from Crust War releases. These ex-EFFIGY riff-mongers have simplified things considerably from their previous band, stripping away the layers of guitars and really committing to metallic grooves a la later AMEBIX or early HELLBASTARD. The intro is a bit of a snoozer, but once "No Cause Relations" kicks in, it's total stenchcore bliss. Crash cymbals are ridden mercilessly and guitar harmonics squeal in classic BOLT THROWER style. Some light synth touches, used much in the same way that FILTH OF MANKIND did to fill out the sound, add atmosphere to the bleak "Fault Segment". The main riff of that song is so sweeping and epic in its simplicity! The final track, "Bloody Ordinary Day", picks up the tempo a bit and wouldn't sound out of place on HELLBASTARD's seminal *Heading For Internal Darkness* LP. The drumming stands out here, with tasteful double kicks and some really interesting, almost tribal patterns. Throughout Ujita's bellow recalls The Baron at his finest. Call me a blasphemer if you must, but I'd rather throw this record on than the newer AMEBIX material any day! A killer vinyl debut, and I suppose I'll have to break down and pick up that CD at some point soon. (Crust War, B1F, 2-9-5 Nishi-Shinsaibashi, Chuo-Ku, Osaka, 542-0086 Japan, punkanddestroy@s4.dion.ne.jp)

My stroke of luck for the month was being able to snag a copy of the repress of this year's finest compilation, *Hardcore Inferno.* Curated by TANTRUM, the LP features multiple tracks by ten bands that regularly play the Hardcore Inferno gigs in Tokyo. The original press of 600 copies disappeared in the blink of an eye, and Depression Records quickly arranged a repress. Hopefully this is the beginning of a trend among labels that tend toward short print runs. I was pleased to see that, along similar lines, Overthrow Records decided to repress ISTERISMO's impossible-to-find *Non Puo Sopprimere Il Mio Conflitto* EP, which was going for megabucks on eBay just a few weeks after it appeared and immediately sold out. But I digress...

The record starts off with five quick tracks from my favorite Brit-core-meets-crasher-crust maniacs DEATH DUST EXTRACTOR. I am a fucking huge fan of this band (anybody got that ultra-limited 12" for sale?) and getting an EP's worth of new songs in the last couple of months between this record and the godly *Yotsuva* comp has been a real treat. This is a bit of a dirtier recording than those tracks, and it's all for the better as far as I'm concerned. Mix the DOOM demos with the chaotic insanity of GLOOM's *Noise Attack Devestating Tokyo City* LP and you get DDE (also you get doom and gloom, heh...). There's a bit of a SORE THROAT influence in the mix as well, as evidenced by the mega-short song, and the telltale use of the word "horrendous." ADA+MAX are the elder statesmen of the comp, having been around the Tokyo scene for years and years now. They're not a band I've followed very closely, but these tracks are pretty good. Very ACCUSED/SEPTIC DEATH-style crossover with some moments of outright metal and some moments of downright weirdness. DEATHTRIBE make their first vinyl appearance since their crucial split EP with KRIEGSHOG, and this stuff kills just as much. I actually thought it was a bit bland the first time I spun this record, but repeat listens have improved my opinion considerably. Not quite as blown out as the earlier material, but brimming with energy, vicious vocals and some killer bass work and

guitar solos. The second song drags a tad, but sometimes every band needs to take things down a notch and ride a mid-tempo riff. SKIZOPHRENIA! are kind of the sleeper hit of the album. There are unfortunately only two tracks but they're spazzed out quirky ones that could be a lost B.G.K. session, especially due to the frenetic bass playing. Very *Network of Friends*, and definitely I need more of this posthaste! TANTRUM contribute three tracks that are all over the map. The first is more in line with the "usual" screaming Japanese HC while the second starts off slow and explodes into an AmRep-ish freak-out that continues into the third. Like their close compatriots the EXIT HIPPIES, you're never really sure what you're going to get with TANTRUM, but it's never not interesting.

The B-side starts out with KROSSA (who also have a new EP out on D-Takt & Rapunk Records). Heavily distorted vocals echo over simple one-two drumbeats and primitive lead—it sounds like dragging the SHITLICKERS kicking and screaming into the twenty-first century. As always, I'm a total sucker for this shit! After a plethora of standout demos, I was super-stoked to hear the new DISTURD tracks (yeah, yeah, funny name... whatever, their English isn't great, how's your Japanese?). They do *not* disappoint. This is some of the most vicious metallic crust since the heyday of S.D.S.! The sound is so huge it's hard to believe they're only a three piece. Even the slow picked parts don't sound cliché, and that's a rare thing indeed! This is a more-than-tantalizing appetizer for their long-delayed EP that's supposed to be out on Blackwater at some point. CHAOTIX unfortunately have the distinction of being the least good band on here. There are just too many elements that don't quite fit together in their songs between the blasting thrash parts, the jangly almost-revolution-summer-y bits and the pop punk melodies. They're probably an interesting band to see live, but it just doesn't translate to vinyl on these tracks as far as I'm concerned. Of course it doesn't help to have to be the lead-in to ISTERISMO, the world's premiere Japanese Italian crasher crust hardcore band. Fuck, what an awesome band! Their sound and aesthetic are totally their own, and I find them endlessly compelling (even if their bass tone does threaten to blow out my speakers every time I put one of their records on!). Four new tracks of noise and chaos that you can love or hate, but not ignore. West Coast tour please? Finally, SACRIFICE are a real surprise. I remembered their tracks on the *Raging Thrash From Blind Vision* comp being pretty lackluster, but these two cuts of tinny garage thrash are fucking great. Sounds like an old demo from the REPULSION/SLAUGHTER days with Tokurow (BASTARD) singing! So there you have it, the best comp of the year. I'm not sure how many of these are kicking around in stores and distros still, but keep an eye out because it's well worth your hard-earned cash. (Depression Records c/o Nisimido Yotutuji, 5 Hagiwara Ichimiya, Aichi, 491-0365 Japan)

As always, if you have comments or a lead on a sick new raw punk band or records for sale drop me a line c/o *MRR* or at PO Box 156583, San Francisco, CA 94115-6583.

# BRACE BELDEN is THE LAST PUNK

Take a snort of powder, eyes bulge like there's fingers poking from inside your skull, a great guffawing sort of fading laugh, then on with the shoes and the coat and out onto the street, to trickle down the gum stained concrete sidewalks towards?! Point is, there is no point, no destination but also none of that "journey is the reason" hogwash neither, no, it's just that walking feels good when every opioid receptor in your brain is spread-legged and ravished, when one part of your head is fucking another and it's beautiful, like fireworks and a warm rain and the girl you adore all in one. It's a great wide burning love that steps into existence from nothingness and it's gorgeous and terrible all at once.

And to think I used to hate them! Or rather, fear them, scared with all my child bones right down to the chalky marrow inside, hate and fear and all that, the negative no, no, no, I felt towards them, *drugs*, was absolute and unchanging, and I had convictions and morals and a sad history, a triple *no* to *drugs* that waned and crumbled and disintegrated, like, oh wow the connection, like when you crush up a *oh man* a pill oh ha-ha that's rich, beautiful, who would've thought? Indeed, that last part, who would've thought that is, from seeing me, once like you too, a precious little boy, blonde even if you can believe it, not too removed from maternal nipple-sucking, milk and laughter and birthday parties to cold nights crying while Dear Old Ma (1951-1996), a closed vast wide impenetrable most of all *locked* door away, crushed and snorted but most of all swallowed and I'm sure wept a couple tears for her own reasons, though I don't and hopefully never will understand them. You see she OD'd and died forever because of these funny white (yellow blue & other) things which aren't expensive and make you like all the things you used to hate. Why wouldn't you take as many as you can? Of course I told everyone she died of cancer, because I was just a tyke and too young to understand the sort of things that did her in, and I suppose she did though I mean that in a sort of unkind way, a cancer of her mind that wasn't physical was just a bad mental thing that drove her to cocaine and pills and all that stuff which again I might mention for most of my life I abhorred saintly and goodly and now can't get enough of, at least the pills part and used to be and sometimes still the cocaine part but mostly the pills, eat sniff crunch just *take*, and oh, oh, oh *ha*! It feels like something else, lemme tell you, some-thing else. Warmth and feeling over every inch of my sweaty hideous pale skin. Anyways I gotta get back to the point, no sense dwelling on feelings however physical and great and calming, but anyways the point is I used to hate drugs. Thought they were terrible, for half-people who couldn't handle reality, thought of 'em like I thought of religion, a crutch for brain-deads unable to cope with their surroundings. Now I see that while I wasn't incorrect in thinking that, why, I was incorrect in hating that, because as I grew older and opened my orbs (now bloodshot, with pupils like pinpoints) to the world around me, oh christ, how do people not take drugs? I bet god exists.

Again with the history—I started when I was thirteen. Or twelve, actually, I think, when a local troublemaker three or four years my senior (making him a loser) got me high on some rocks overlooking the Bay. I was just getting out of Lord of the Rings/D&D and into rock 'n' roll, but vestiges of my previous science fiction/fantasy mindset must've been lurking in the corridors of my mind because I imagined I was a hobbit for around two hours, when I began eating Doritos 3Ds and forgot all about my Middle Earth hopes and dreams. I smoked weed for a while, irregularly of course (I was twelve, for chrissakes!) and sneaking sips of already watered-down booze from friends' parents' liquor cabinets, "Am I drunk yet? Are you drunk?" and maybe we were! Or we weren't, I can't even remember, point is that I didn't drink much, didn't smoke dope much, didn't do much of anything besides eat pizza and watch TV, but that was mostly because I couldn't get my young soft but grubby nonetheless *hands* on the sons-abitches, you know, *dope* and *booze*. I couldn't have them, not easy when you're fat and ugly and got no friends. But I didn't see a world beyond those two, and in the few instances back then where my new friends (for I at last made some, older and uglier than me) would sniff cocaine or take acid I ignored it because deep down in my cavernous echo chest lied a heart that knew it was wrong.

It goes without saying that eventually I joined them, when I was sixteen I think, and loved it and wanted more and talked for a long time and smiled, oh did I smile, face looked like a slit throat but with teeth, all my teeth white and yellow both, chattering and laughing and stinking. I felt terrible the next morning but the next night wanted more. Dear Dead Mother's soul in Purgatory be damned (get it?), I'd like another sniff please, I'll give you three bucks, no wait here's four (please not five) for a line, c'mon just a bump then, give it to me and yet all the while I was yammer mouth condemning events like "Chaos in Tejas" as just cocaine circle-jerks among "cool guy" hardcore and punk types, so I kept my own usage of the stuff underneath the collective radar (which, in retrospect, would not have given half a shit in a third of a second), but not so far under where I couldn't nudge kiss c'mon for another bump or two (or three). Shame, for shame Belden. But it never got the better of me and I kept it OK cool mostly because of lack of personal funds besides lunch money for high school lunches I never ate (not once, not ever). So even though I couldn't afford it any-

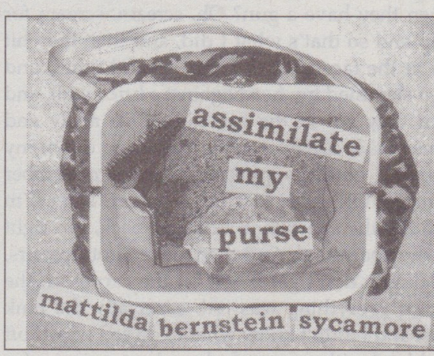
ways I just said I wouldn't ever do it much, that it's just a special occasion thing that once a month was too much already. Everyone around me smoked weed constantly, always high, and while I joined them a few times I felt no affinity towards the stuff, couldn't handle it in fact. I became shaky and nervous, and it was a real heavy bummer man when I was realized I was simply too uptight. I spit on their shadows for being lazy pigs, fat and happy.

But somehow, I can't even remember how but somehow, I discovered pills, and kept discovering them and it was exciting, because there were so many and they made you feel different, real different, but I could still do homework (not like I did) and go to band practice and shows and no one's the wiser. Except you, of course.

What is great about drugs is that by taking them (and I'm not talking about just taking them, in fact that's a wrong phrasing in all the ways except literal, because they actually take you, deliver you even, from life and society and all that) what is great about drugs is that when you take them, you're different. No matter that half the humans in a mile radius of me are fucked up as bad or worse than me—my experience is uniquely mine. A line in the morning, another a little later, a line after that and lines and lines and lines until your whole life is a line, a straight one of powder and your mouth is a line, tight with a little upturn at the edges that might be a smile or a twitch but is in fact nothing at all, lines, lines, lines, that you ride right on out of the present. You're out of morality, you're neither master nor slave, you're marked *not present*, you're *out of it*, and that's great, at least I think it is, hey honey it was paradise—I mean like say you spend every day in this doped-up bliss, where you don't give half a shit about the huh hah jimjams in this town (OH, sweet uncle Lou, that's one thing you got right) *or* those pretty girls who sneer at and despise you *or* your parents and friends and yourself slowly inexorably walking weakening dying doomed *or* how it's getting worse (the "it" right there refers to: money, girls, house, health, Iran, Obama, Tea Party, money, happiness, alcohol, friendship, etcetera, infinity). Nothing affects, nothing can. When I was younger I used to look forward to bands coming into town, count down the days, I used to worry about shows and my stomach was so often filled with that Mexican jumping bean feeling, butterflies some people call it, heading up to shows. Sweaty hand wringing, nervous at pretty girls. But with drugs you take yourself out of all of that, if you go down that line far enough. It doesn't matter when you can just get high; all that stuff is so trivial, so little. But the heavy stuff is far away too, so you just float in a void, but the void ain't so bad. Nothing can grab you there, nothing's frightening or stressful (what a stupid word) and no one's cruel and you just want to lie in bed and read. Lightness and peace. It's a sacred thing only Orientals really understand. Your body don't even complain at first, and what's crazy is your heart which never has felt all that great before feels open and different, as if those terrible heavy chains on it have all at once disintegrated and you are at last *f-r-e-e*, at least until the vial is on empty, and then you gotta go get some more.

Oh and that re-up, that desperate grab is the worst. Even if you're high it feels wrong, first the phone call then the walk down Leavenworth, buzzed into an SRO hotel, up five flights of stairs *knock-knock-who is it*? What a mean voice, angry father and mother and God itself, because that sonovabitch is god, you gotta be supplicatory and nice and smile and humor him. These drug dealers aren't your friends even if this one offered me a cold 7-Up and a line of coke last time I was there. He's giving you death and he knows it, because he's dying himself, and he's half-crazy from the stuff he sells, a mercurial madman erratic in actions and thoughts and words. He could shoot you if he wants to, and he's shirtless and you just stare, wide-eyed at the tattoo of the sacred Latin woman waist-up naked tattooed on his forearm, which is half a century old but could crush you like that can of soda you refused earlier (did the coke though). Money is money and now it's in his hand, but you got some so you rush back down those stairs, tongue flapping around like a fucking dog, sucking up all that stale Mexican air in the place, little brown children peaking out of doorways and halls, now you're back on the street, head turning looking for the Man (ha-ha, he's on 'em too, I bet he is, how could you see and commit so much evil without?), pause to light a Camel, and you feel James Bond Cool, and now that four block scuttle towards your own hovel where you crush, snort, repeat, ad infinitum into heaven and destiny and nothing.(Oh and I seem to have forgotten that when you can't re-up, when he's out of town or too fucked up to pick up the phone, that's when you shake and vomit and cry in the shower, and when you take fifteen sleeping pills just so you can make it two days without completely losing your mind, and it's best to sleep a lot, lots of heavy blankets so you sweat out all of the gunk that makes you totally completely mad. And you can't answer the telephone because you'll just scream. Maybe you can write but usually not, the few times I have I just ended up hammering out my obituary and Last Will and Testament in a thousand different ways.) If I can't have greatness, I can have the illusion of it. I'm a great writer when I'm doped, the Best now and forever, hours spent by lamplight re-reading my old "works" (sorry for the asshole word, I don't know too many) (too many non-asshole words) and for once smiling dumbly instead of crumpling. If I can't have heaven I'll make it for myself, or at least I'll let the whitecoats in Germany dream it up and ship it to America to help the cripples who need money more than me and I need this bit of salvation more than them, because they're already lost and hooked on heroin besides. What's the difference between believing something and being something? If I believe I'm a great writer and a mature person, even though right now, this second, (even stone sober) I write gibberish and I'm an infant, then to me, in my reality, I am that. But, oh, there're so many holes in that logic I could use it as a colander. And once the high wears off and you can look at it objective, oh, well, oh, well, that's a real downer. I guess feeling happy is different than being happy, feeling good is different than being good. I'm not even sure what I'm trying to say in this whole thing, I just think and laugh about how I used to be so obsessed with seeing things clearly, seeing things for how they are, and how in fact doing just that is my one natural talent, and how I try so hard and spend so much money on the opposite, on self-deceit and drugged haze that I don't know this from that. I said before that life is like a line, that gets longer and longer until you run out of materials, uh-oh, bag's empty. Then you're really in trouble, you're at the end and then God licks his lips, takes up the straw, and snorts. And then you're really high, baby, ha-ha-ha. I can't wait.

(Next one will be about rock and roll)




**Credit**

I didn't want JoAnne's parents to get her journals; that was the most important thing to me at the time. San Francisco welcomed me like a widow and that's why I decided to move back. I returned to Boston to prepare, decided to take the train cross-country in a few months—in those days, you could buy one ticket and travel anywhere you wanted for 30 days, I guess I knew I was going back to San Francisco but first I wanted to spend some time in Minneapolis and Chicago and Seattle, just to see. A friend of JoAnne's from Seattle leant me her one-bedroom apartment in Chicago, she went to stay with her girlfriend—I couldn't believe she had so much space, in a fancy neighborhood even; Chicago was still cheap back then. I was in Chicago for the music, the music that I lived for, that hard clanky knock-you-down magic. The problem was, I didn't know where to find it exactly—it wasn't what they called the Chicago sound, deep and soulful, it was the new Chicago sound. But I found the place that sounded right, from the description, and I put together an outfit that was relaxed enough for a Thursday but not too relaxed—this was when I was really into tights with shorts, when my grandmothers came together to visit me in Boston I wore the crazy neon plaid ones, with contrasting polyester plaid cut-off shorts, of course, and maybe clips in my neon hair and they couldn't believe I wasn't doing this just to be provocative.

I wanted them to see me as me. I showed them the photo booth pictures from the clubs and they asked if I was a transvestite. I told him that language was outdated. Do you wear dresses? When I'm in the mood. In Chicago, I was

wearing the silver tights, which were thigh-highs so I used the clips that looks like garters too, with striped red polyester cut-offs, a big mohair sweater and a pink scarf. On my way I stopped at a bank machine, maybe I noticed two guys in a car looking over at me like I didn't deserve to live, but this happened all the time. I realized I'd walked the wrong way, so I went back down the same street, a dark street really but I hadn't thought about it—that's when they jumped out of the car, from behind, one of them held a gun to my head and the other one said give me all your money, so I did, but it was only twenty dollars, they said something like let's teach this faggot a lesson or maybe they didn't say anything but I knew.

No, first I remember thinking: what are you supposed to do, what are you supposed to do when they have a gun? Oh, scream, scream for help and so that's what I did, and then they hit me in the face with the gun, several times, and then slammed my head against a brick wall, and then they got in the car and drove away and there was blood everywhere, pouring down my face and onto my pink scarf and I remember thinking OK, at least I know where I am, I'm right by the apartment, I can get back, I'm right by the apartment. And then, once I got upstairs, I thought: don't get blood on the carpet. In the mirror everything was red, especially the pink scarf and I didn't know what to do so I wiped off the blood with paper towels and got some ice for my face but there was too much to cover. I called Melissa in San Francisco, maybe because her roommate was a nurse or maybe I didn't remember that, I'm not sure, but her roommate said Mattilda should go to the hospital right away, with a head wound she might have a concussion, and then I remembered her roommate was from Chicago, so I said where should I go? And she said oh, she's in Chicago, don't go to the hospital—wait until tomorrow, and go to a clinic.

When I got back to San Francisco, I tried not to go to the Mission. Luckily I was staying with Chris in the Haight, earlier I was thinking that JoAnne was the only person who I'd shared a bed with for a month, but actually I stayed with Chris in his bed for a month too. In a tiny room barely larger than the bed, I think he paid less than $200 for it and we split that for the month. It was kind of like we were lovers except we didn't have sex, we just talked about everything and slept with our arms touching shoulders around backs lips brushing against necks and sometimes Chris would wake up screaming and I would pet his head and say it's OK, it's OK, just like when we first met. I guess it was a while before I couldn't sleep. And did I really say it's OK? It's not like anything was OK, except in that bed with Chris and I wondered if we should have sex but I didn't want to lose the safety. So I didn't mention what was maybe under the surface.

I ran into Zee at a café in the Lower Haight—we hadn't talked since I'd left San Francisco because he didn't want to talk to me and I even threw out the Cocteau Twins album that was always on when we were fighting, were we falling apart because of that album or did we put it on as soon as everything started to come apart? But then I ran into him and it was like suddenly we were friends again. We made plans to go with Chris to Corona Heights to watch the sunset, but then I got a trick so I couldn't go and then Chris and Zee ended up sleeping together. I hated that narrative—the uncontrollable gay desire—why couldn't they have said something to me first? Chris didn't even tell me for a week.

But then the strange thing that happened was that I actually kind of liked seeing them together, they were arguing right away and that was the part that stressed me out; I tried to help them to get along. This was when everyone was talking about how expensive San Francisco was getting, it was hard to find a room for less than $400 but I found a place for $247, in a huge flat in the Lower Haight with all these random people who talked about what they were going to do for Burning Man—it was eight months away but they were already planning. One day, the person who had the lease came home from work with a vintage black Mercedes, and I knew something was wrong. He had some kind of computer job, but people didn't use the word dot-com yet. At least not people I was around.

When I did go to the Mission, I looked at the buildings and all I could think about was death. Chris and I were planning to get an apartment together, but then he and Zee ended up moving to Oregon to work at a retreat center—this was their faerie phase, and I stood there at the bus station with tears in my eyes, I felt like they were leaving me. I mean they were. What was I doing in San Francisco? Chrissie Contagious came to stay with me—remember her, she was screaming naked in a tree when I met JoAnne. And Zee that same weekend, back at the March on Washington in 1993, I guess that was only three years before but it already felt like several world ago. Chrissie was another one of JoAnne's close friends, when someone so important to you dies like that you become closer to the others who are left; you have to. This was when I'd decided that K was the only drug that was safe for me, it was the answer, and I ended up buying a ton of it for someone who disappeared, so then I figured I'd sell it, Chrissie and I could sell it together since she was the party girl. But then I'd come home and she'd be cutting it up on my mirror. Oh well—might as well do some.

One night we went out to the Hole in the Wall, the bar that was the most popular at the time for faggots trying to act like they weren't trendy, just masculine, they liked rock and beer and tattoos, if I wasn't having sex in the back then I was scaring everyone with runway. That night Chrissie met someone and afterwards they wanted to go to Blow Buddies. I'd never actually been to Blow Buddies before—even though I'd heard it was mostly circuit queens, it wasn't like I was ready for bed, I was never ready for bed when the bars closed. While we were in line, Chrissie's new fling took out a credit card and poured some crystal on it, then held it up to my nose. I'd always said that people should do their drugs in public, so I got caught up in the moment and inhaled, then the first thing I thought was: oh no, I've just ruined my life. And then: might as well have fun. So I ended up doing more crystal than ever before, but first we got kicked out of Blow Buddies for saying girl too much, and then Chrissie and the fling tried to fuck in my bed while I rearranged the room and tried to pretend I wasn't thinking about more crystal until they took it out again—oh, sure—just a little.. Then when Chrissie went to film a porn video I was waiting at the End Up and I bought two more quarters, I was alternating it with huge bumps of K and then on the dance floor it was like I was ten feet in the air but somehow my feet still touched the ground and I could bounce in the stars except it was daylight now I was still bouncing.

Maybe twenty hours of drugs later we were back at the Hole in the Wall, I figured I would do this huge bump of K, like a whole capful, the kind of thing that normally would guarantee you a K-hole but I figured I'd be fine because of all the crystal. Soon enough I was sinking into the corner, the lights a toy for my eyes I couldn't speak but it was OK, I knew this feeling, it was OK until the bar started to close and K wasn't big in San Francisco yet, they didn't know what it meant when my friends said she's in a K-hole; the staff picked me up and dropped me onto the sidewalk outside. Then I couldn't get up off the ground because my head felt like it was cracking open, I was holding Rick's hand and I felt like if he let go I would be gone. I didn't mention Rick before but he was the one with barrettes who I told to leave school, and then he did, and when I got back to San Francisco he was there too and we would go to bars together and try not to go to bars together, this time we ran into each other by coincidence and I was holding his hand because I could feel my life slipping away, eyes closed but everything was flying by. No one knew what to do until this homeless guy came over and said pour cold water on him and it'll bring him down, my friends weren't convinced but I nodded and they poured cold water on me and it worked. After I recovered, I decided to go on a food elimination diet, to figure out all my allergies, and also the strictest anti-candida diet because when else wouldn't I be drinking? I wasn't drinking because alcohol just made me think that of course I would decide to do drugs, even if I hadn't had anything to drink. I went to look for an apartment, but they all emphasized the credit check—my credit wasn't good and I didn't want to live in San Francisco anyway; I decided to move to Seattle so I could feel calm again.

*The writing in this column is an excerpt from some crazy memoirish thing I'm working on called* The End of San Francisco. *My most recent book is a novel,* So Many Ways to Sleep Badly. *I'm also turning lostmissing, my public art project, into some kind of book-type thing, yay for more books! And I recently finished a new anthology called* Why Are Faggots So Afraid of Faggots? *I know you're wondering the same thing. Now I'm just waiting for someone to publish it. You can communicate with me via www.mattildabernsteinsycamore.com, which includes past* MRR *columns. Or you can write to me at 537 Jones Street, #3152, San Francisco, CA 94102.*

"Chris, your column is late again."

What have I been doing? You know, the usual bullshit. Mixing projects a few nights a week, having practice, getting ready for tour, booking live rock concerts, trying not to eat like total shit. The usual. And my column, neglected as usual. Like the Sea Monkeys I never remembered to feed. Yes, they did die, and I'm sure if there's a hell there's a place for me where I'll be starved to death by a bunch of giant, walking, talking, neglectful Sea Monkeys, errrr... Brine Shrimp.

Raw-Fi reviewz:

OTAN – *Sociedad Despreciable* LP: Just got this shredder the other night pillaging the Painkiller distro ("what's new that doesn't suck"). Boy, this one does not suck. I'd kinda put off checking this stuff out, but it's some real beer-in-your-ear, piss-in-your-nostrils, raw-as-shit basement punk. Drums sound like hammers on plywood, bass sounds like engine gears getting stripped out, guitars sound like a power drill. You can make a record sound this good (or bad) with one $20 radio shack mic, and a used 4-track you bought on Craigslist. You might not write hardcore and punk quite this good, but maybe you will? Totally awesome, this could be some Finnish demo joint from, y'know… '82, just totally has the sound. Another quality La Vida Es Un Mus joint which also means I can't read anything on the record because I always stunk at Spanish. Everyone wants maximum fuzz-distort-noize now, but few get the sound as authentically as this. Found myself actually debating just how much to emphasize the distorted sounds on a recent recording, and at what point it becomes too much. I know to some of you fools out there it's never enough, but I feel like if you couldn't go see the band live in their practice hole or at a the local gig hole and hear the same amount of "noise not musick" [sic], then it's too much. But hey, I'm not everyone, and maybe I just "don't get it?"

VIPER – *Committing the Seven Deadly Sins* demo tape: This has been out like maybe six months already, and it's going to come out as a 7" soon, but I thought I should mention this total metal-punk jammer in case you're not clued in. *Anyway,* here we have another one-man configuration mashing up all my favorite shit into one foul stew of completely tasteless abuse. Take some early German thrash (demo-era SODOM, POISON, DESTRUCTION), smash it up with everyone's Japanese cult faves like ZOUO, G-ZET, and, you know… the really big one that starts with G… it's the best of both worlds. Or, if you're a concerned mom, it's the worst of both worlds. The guitars and bass are caked under a layer of dull fuzz, the drums sound like they're on the far side of a cement dungeon (or basement) and the Satan-worshiping freak vocals are doused in reverb and distortion. From what I've heard, the 7" version of this is kind of cleaned up, so maybe if you want to get the full level of ignorance you should seek out the cassette version. If they knew at my job that I listen to music like this while I'm working, I'm not sure if they'd want me to come back. Most people's idea of a good time at my job is Bob Weir playing a benefit performance (I work at a non-profit). Then again this may be the head Viper's idea of a good time too. The vinyl's gonna be on 540 Rec. Tape is self-released.

These two really give me hope that all the freaks out there know how to keep it piss-raw without using a laptop and a Behringer four-channel mixer.

Some important shit to know about amplifiers (if you don't already): Before I go on, I was never much of a math guy, and I frequently have to verify with someone before turning on a head with a cabinet connected to it, but I'm often surprised how few people are familiar with this stuff. Loud music kills brain cells I guess. Anyway, hopefully I don't fuck this up. I'm simplifying it as much as possible, and I'm sure this would be laughable to anyone with a little electrical know-how, but consider this the extreme idiot's, extremely brief guide to not breaking your amp.

As you hopefully know, your guitar head (when I say guitar, that includes bass guitar) is rated for the amount of power that it sends to a cabinet (or group of cabinets). In turn the cabinet tells you (usually right by the speaker cable input) how much electricity it can resist without blowing (sometimes they call it the impedance). These things are generally measured in ohms (sometimes abbreviated with a Greek omega symbol: ø). Usually you'll see heads that send four or eight ohms of power, and usually cabs can impede the same. Sometimes you'll see sixteen ohms too. The best case scenario is that you match the number of ohms going from the head to the cab. If you send a certain amount of power from a head into a cab with a greater impedance than the head, you're likely to get less volume than you're used to but probably no serious side effects. If you the amount of power you're sending to a cab is greater than the impedance on the cab, you could blow up your head.

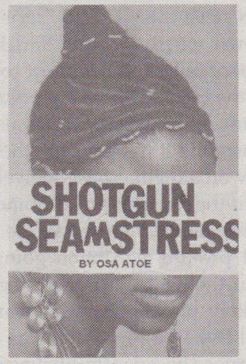
Four ohms to four ohms is good.

Four ohms to eight ohms is okay in a pinch.

Eight ohms to four ohms is bad.

"Head should be less than or equal to cab" is what I have written in my gearbox. I know this seems like the stupidest, easiest thing ever, but there's a pile of busted heads that aren't worth the money to repair sitting in our practice space that are all due to years of neglect by a number of unnamed parties.

Anyway this could save your a major headache during a recording sesh. You don't want your guitar/bass head to get fry itself halfway through a recording, I think. And while you're at it, I'd suggest tuning the snare drum too.




I went to a dance night last weekend to support some friends of mine who were DJing and one of the first things my girlfriend spots is a dude in a swastika t-shirt. Turns out he's in one of the bands playing that night, so he's not just a random guy in a swastika shirt, he's the center of attention. I'm not mentioning any names, because I don't wish to draw any more attention to this person or his band; they're well known enough in this town. I will mention that this t-shirt is related to an old New Orleans punk band who used the image of a swastika made of crawfish (what a horrible idea on so many levels!) to be shocking. Of course, the wearer of the shirt claims not to be racist. I'm not sure if anyone's ever asked him if he knows that the swastika is mainly an anti-Semitic symbol that is also homophobic and fascist. I'm guessing it wouldn't make a difference.

As you may well have guessed, I've never been into using bigoted symbols or language jokingly, for shock value or for irony. In fact, it's been pissing me off for almost a decade now and I've finally hit my wall. Back around 2003 or so this band Japanther was blowing up all over the country, and it was no different in Portland. All of a sudden, everyone I knew had a Japanther poster hanging up in their bedroom or kitchen. Fine. Later on, it came out that Japanther was connected to the infamous Vice Magazine and their label Vice Records. I happened to find an article by one of the founders of that magazine in an online right wing journal called The American Conservative, in which he basically admitted that Vice had a right wing agenda.

Of course, a lot of people in my community were concerned. I remember my housemate Nate contacted Japanther directly to ask them what was up. I also remember getting into an argument with another woman in my community who just wouldn't believe what I was telling her I had read in that article because, at least at the time, Vice's primary mode of spreading its right wing ideas was through—you guessed it—irony and low-rate humor. For many, it's more difficult to see these kinds of messages clearly when everything's a joke. I never read an entire issue of that magazine and I haven't laid eyes on a copy of it in years, thankfully, but that situation really sticks with me.

Even though we've come a long way as a nation and a community when it comes to bigotry, the coast is not clear! Not even close. There was just a racist coup of a local government in Northern Louisiana a couple of months ago! (If

you don't believe me, Google "racist coup"!) I live in a town where Orleans Parish Prison is filled with poor folks and people of color and the majority of the black citizens are poor. I get confused with my ex-girlfriend who is also black on a regular basis and it happens to other people of color I know on a regular basis as well. God forbid I ever "fit the description" of someone who's done anything illegal. Look at all the anti-immigration and pro-life legislation going down in Arizona, and the white supremacist groups that are most likely making Barack Obama's life a nightmare. I live in a town that was allowed to flood on purpose because its citizens were mostly poor and black. Rape is still a problem. Hate crimes against queers are still too common. These are just a few examples of the war that is being waged in the United States right now. Knowing all of this, how can you make a joke of it? Oh, it's because you're a straight white male and none of this affects you directly so you don't have to care. I'm so fucking disgusted with that shit.

The ultimate problem with ironic humor when combined with symbols or language that many people find degrading is that the people who use it are being ambiguous about what they really believe. You're saying something racist, but then you say you're not racist, which means you've actually said nothing. Instead of saying something you don't mean, why not say something you do mean? If you're a bigot, admit it so I know never to come near you or go to any of your events. If you're not, then why hide behind irony? What is it that you're really passionate about? What is it that you really believe? Why not be clear? These days, I'm feeling that, "I'm not racist/homophobic/etc." doesn't mean shit to me unless you're explicitly saying and showing, "I am anti-racist," or "I am against homophobia."

It's time to pick a side. There is no being neutral when it comes to these things. Saying "I am not political" is a copout that basically means, "I'm fine with the way things are." And being fine with the way things are means that you support racism, classism, heterosexism and the patriarchy because that is the default in our society. If you're not against those things, then you're going along with it even if you don't mean to because those forms of oppression constitute normalcy here in the USA. Besides, what are you, depressed? How can you not have a passionate opinion one way or another about some of the most important issues of our time?

The old school, straight-white-dude-dominated, New Orleans punk scene needs to catch up or get left behind. I am not talking about the old time and New Orleans jazz punk scene, which, as far as I've seen, creates welcoming DIY spaces in this city. The old-timers I'm talking about know who they are! This city is changing, for better or for worse, and all the punks you've alienated and written off as PC aren't just going to move to San Francisco or New York to get away from your stupidity. We're staying and we're creating our own scenes that are going be better than yours—stronger, smarter and better music, too.

**A Turtle's Tale**

"George," my father yells from our driveway, "get your lazy thirteen-year-old ass out here right now!"

From my bedroom, I debate ignoring my father and finishing the Spiderman comic book I'm so engrossed in. I'm up to a part where Doc Ock again escapes from prison and kidnaps Aunt May, and Spidey is torn between saving his Aunt and getting some action from his hot girlfriend.

"George, you little fuck," yells my dad, "get out here now. Don't make me come up there!"

"Don't make me come up there" is slang for kicking my ass. I'm out on the driveway in about five seconds.

"Look at that," says my dad, pointing at two white kittens on the driveway. One was lying on its side, eyes closed and mouth open. The other has its tail in the air and head against the black tar pavement.

There's blood next to each.

"What happened to those kitties?" I ask my dad.

"You tell me," he says, "and its kitty."

I look closely at the kittens, and my dad is right. It's one cat. Split in half at the midsection. The tail end has no head. The head end has no tail. I almost puke.

"Well?" asks my dad.

I tell him I don't know what happened. But I did understand why he's asking me, though.

My brothers and I used to take cats, kittens, and other small creatures, and make "roller coasters" for them. We'd put them in cardboard boxes, then find some unused wallpaper and slide the animals in the boxes down "the track" from the back porch.

Sometimes the cats would fall out. But we didn't worry; they'd always land on their feet. We never *really* hurt any cats. Just gave them fun rides.

Besides, *catracide* wasn't our style.

As my dad and I stare at the white fluffs of bloody fur on the driveway, suddenly the kitten's eyes open, as does its mouth. Blood then pours out, over its pink tongue.

I go over to the grass and puke my brains out.

When I finish, I look back at my dad, and he mouths the word "pussy" at me.

Then, our housekeeper, Attie, comes strolling out of the house. My dad takes Attie by the arm, and shows her the dead kitten.

"Damn if I ain't seen that before," says Attie.

Then she goes on to explain that when she lived in Alabama, she saw lots of dead animals that looked like that. She explained that the dead cat was the result of an overly large and overly hungry snapping turtle.

"Snapping turtle?" I ask Attie.

I'd seen them in our pond in the woods, but they didn't look big enough to bite off my nose. Or even my small toe.

"It's a goddamn snapping turtle," swears Attie, "and you boys best find it before it eats your dogs, or some of you chilren."

She always calls us "chilren."

Attie then leaves my dad and I alone with the dead kitten.

"What are you looking at?" screams my dad at me. "Go inside the garage, get a fucking shovel, and clean up this fucking mess."

***

About a week later, while my brothers and I are riding down rocky dirt covered hills in old steel barrels, cutting ourselves up against the rusted metal, we stumble upon one of our baby goats at the bottom of the hill.

Its stomach is missing.

"What the fuck happened to the goat?" asks my brother, Sam.

I hit him, hard.

"Don't you fucking swear, Sam," I say.

"That's fuckin' sick," exclaims Luke, my other brother.

I hit him as well.

That night, when my dad returns home from work, I lead him and Attie to where the dead goat is busy attracting flies and maggots.

"P-U," says Attie, "that goat smells worse than Luke's farts!"

"Do you think it's the turtle," asks my dad, knowing nothing about nature except that it's meant to be torn down and paved over.

Attie tells us it is, and even shows us the bite marks around the belly of the bloody beast. Of course I walk about five feet away and throw up.

This time, though, my dad doesn't call me a pussy.

He just says calmly, "Go in the fucking garage, get a fucking shovel and clean up this fucking mess, you useless fuck."

***

A couple of days later, my next door neighbor Andy calls me and tells me to come over and listen to the new Kiss album with him while we go fishing. I'm busy trying to figure out how to play with myself, so I tell him let's do it some other time.

"I got a case of Coors," he says.

Five minutes later, I'm down the street.

"I just got the new Kiss album," explains Andy, who gives me all his Izod shirts when he grows out of them, "we can blast the stereo out the window, and go bass fishing!"

I look around at Andy's house, and his large pond in his backyard.

It seems like a fine idea to me.

"Where's the beer?" I ask him.

Two minutes later, Andy exits his house with Kiss blaring on the stereo, two fishing rods in one hand and a case of Coors in the other.

Cool.

We each find good rocks to sit on and cast our rods into the pond. As "Calling Dr. Love" blasts from his stereo, Andy asks me if we've had any dead animal problems lately.

I crack open a Coors, banned this side of the Mississippi, and tell him we have.

I explain to him about the loss of the kitten and goat, and how I buried them and stuck crosses made of sticks over their graves.

"But you're a Jew," says Andy, "why not a Star of David?"

I just stare at him.

He's a fellow Jew amongst the gentiles.

Andy then explains that he also found a kitten on his driveway, or rather, *half of one*, and a couple of dead ducks in the grass.

I tell him I him I didn't know he even owned a cat. Or any pet.

"It was one of yours," he replies.

"Oh," I reply.

It figures. We had over 38 cats. Give or take a couple.

Take, I guess.

Andy pops open a Coors and guzzles it.

***

About an hour later, as we both finish our fourth beer, we see a strange sight.

A mother duck, with all her ducklings swimming behind her, quacks loudly as the last in line of her babies suddenly vanishes beneath the water.

"Whoa," I say. "Jaws."

We keep watching as another duckling disappears, then its blood rises to the surface.

"Holy fucking motherfucker shit!" exclaims Andy.

I hit him.

He's not supposed to swear.

Suddenly, I feel a nibble on my fishing line and snap the reel back. I land a pretty huge big-mouthed bass, and then try to free the hook from the fish's eye.

"Leave it on the line," explains Andy. "I have an idea."

(To be continued in the book!)

This excerpt is from *Playing Right Field: A Jew Grows In Greenwich* by George Tabb on Soft Skull Press

Take My Life, Please!

**Endnotes:**

1. I've been getting a lot of letters saying, "You should do a compilation book of your stories!" Truth is, I have *two books* out right now: *Playing Right Field* and *Surfing Armageddon*, both on Soft Skull Press. Check them out via Amazon or your local bookshop! I'm working on a third as I write this. I guarantee you haven't read any of these stories in many years!

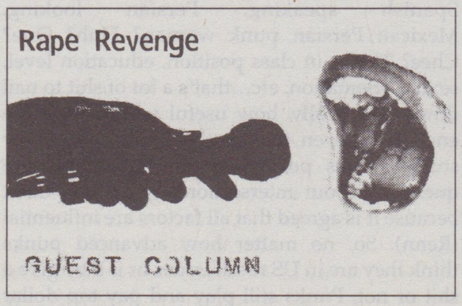
2. Been really into the iPhone games lately. *PandaMania* from FuzzPow kicks total ass. You shoot arrows at bad guys to get your mustache back! The more you play, the more your arrows can get upgraded like more lightning, fire, ice, etc. This game is as addictive as crack. And at only 99 cents… whoa, what a deal! Also check out *Babeorella* from Doublesix. Totally a *Barbarella* rip-off, totally stupid, sexist and idiotic, and totally fun! You play as a hot space chick who uses her whip and other weapons to fight aliens! Yay!!! Then there's *Sync-Ball* from Tozai Games. Great puzzle game. GREAT! You have to move two balls into the right position for the payoff. At least that's what I keep telling her! Really, this is clever and seems to go on forever… with harder and harder challenges. Also, check out *Super Newtronic* from Phantom EFX. More playing with your balls, except this time, rub them the right way and they explode! It's pretty darn cool. Finally, there's *Nimp* from Neowiz Entertainment. This game claims you have a nymph in you pocket. Hey! Ho! You know what I'm saying? Actually, this "game" is kinda fun for little kids… lots of mini-games and stuff. I'm a bit old for this sort of thing—but my nephews think it's pretty cool, and they play *Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* all day! Kids…

3. The new Doctor Who looks terrible in still photo shots, but in action he IS Doctor Who. Best show on the planet. Probably the universe. And I'd marry Amy Pond in a second!

4. Everyone knows I'm a HUGE Ramones fan. But in the end, their albums were pretty lame. That's why I love bands like The Riverdales, The Rydells and The Lillingtons so much. They do the Ramones better than the Ramones did themselves at the end. I especially like the spy-themed songs a la "Havana Affair" and "Commando." That's why songs like "Toledo" and "Three Bullets" by The Rydells rock my world, as do songs like "One Armed Man" and "Final Transmission" from The Lillingtons. I mean, how cool are the lyrics that start out "Field operation for the fatherland!" Punk fucking rock!

5. Some of you may not now that I'm really sick and you CAN help!

Please visit www.myspace.com/helpgeorgetabb. Thank you!




When we heard that Dillinger Escape Plan were coming to Calgary, we knew our band Rape Revenge just *had* to open for them. Of course the possibility of this was slim, considering how new of a band we are. Also, they were playing a bar, and we only play all ages shows… What to do?

Rape Revenge played the fucking parking lot!

We packed up our gear in our shitty jeep and told all our friends to meet us there at 7 p.m. Once we got there, we tested one of the electrical outlets in front of the venue. No power. Fuck.

We knew we couldn't back out—we had come all this way. We found a plug-in in the parking lot next to the venue. By this time lots of the people waiting outside for Dillinger Escape Plan were already in the show (well, the legal show, that is). Still, our friends were there as we set up our gear super quick.

"Hi, we're Dillinger Escape Plan," I screamed, as we broke into our first song. The sound was surprisingly good bouncing off the buildings around us.

Halfway through the first song the neighbors across the fence came over to check it out. "Welcome to the neighborhood! You guys sound great," they yelled. What luck!

We pounded through the next four songs as our audience grew to include passersby, as well as the venue's bouncers we were worried would beat us up. "That was fucking heavy," the bouncer ended up saying, before he went back to work without incident.

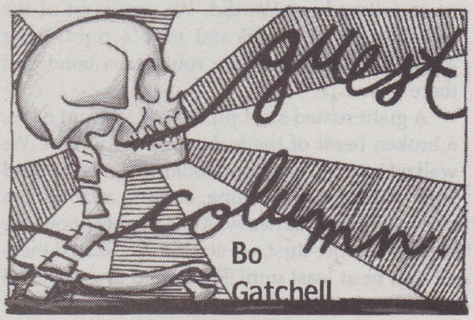
People wanted us to play longer, but we figured we would just play one more and quit while we were ahead (and before anyone called the pigs).

This show was amazing. No cops were called, and people had a great time. It was all free and all promoted by word of mouth. Some kids even approached us after to grab flyers for our show at the end of the month.

The best part of this show was the realization of how easy it is to do this kind of thing. We don't need permission, we just need an extension chord and some friends who have our backs. It's so easy to write things off as impossible—what is truly punk rock is just going for it.

Rape Revenge sincerely hope that more bands start doing guerrilla shows in Calgary, and all over. These are our streets, these are our towns; we don't need to wait around for a hall owner to give us a chance, or bars to give us a break. We can create our own fun! The only thing holding us back is ourselves.

If you would like to see a video of the show, you can check it on our myspace at www.myspace.com/raperevengeband. If you would like to contact us and share your stories of sweet guerrilla shows, or just tell us we suck, our email is raperevengeband@riseup.net.




**Cokes and Snickers**

Jimi calls me at about 2:50. "Hey, we're leaving Amber's house now," he tells me. He asks if I want to go skateboard and I tell him, "Of course I do." The plan was to take my little spine ramp to Jimi's girlfriend's backyard so that we can skate in the shade. At 3:00 Jimi calls me back. "Hey man, what are you doing?" he says while suppressing a giggle. Before I can answer he asks another question, "Can you hear my voice echoing?" He is still trying not to giggle, but he isn't doing too good of a job of it. I can hear him giggle and I tell him so. He asks a third question, "Do you know what that echo is from?" Now he is full on laughing, I can hear the ecstasy in his voice. I'm confused now, and I ask Jimi what the fuck he is talking about. The answer he gives me

is as startling as it is amazing. "Full-pipes, man! We found fucking whole pipes."

I guess this is the part where I lay some personal history on you. I live in a small city in South Georgia called Valdosta, a city of about 50 thousand people that is 15 miles from the Florida border. A city where nothing ever happens. So when Jimi told me that he was standing in the middle of a full pipe, I was incredulous. "Bullshit," was my response. "Bullshit nothing," was his. After a few minutes of "no ways", "I can't believe its," and "holy shits," it was established that I was to meet up with Jimi and some others at Jimi's girlfriend's house, where we could all park our cars.

I parked and grabbed my shit out of the car. A broom, a gallon of water, some towels, and a camera were all placed haphazardly in my backpack. I picked it all up and took it to the porch, where everybody was sitting, smoking cigarettes, and smiling. After a few more "holy shits" we convinced Teddy that it was probably best if we took his car, mostly because the rest of us were too chicken-shit to take ours. So we loaded up, and after an extremely unnecessary stop at McDonalds wherein I think I remember someone saying, "We don't need cheeseburgers right now, let the gnar be your cheeseburger," we headed to the pipes.

So, we got there. We drove slowly into the driveway of an abandoned warehouse, the kind that dot the landscape of many a town in Georgia. We drove around the back of the warehouse, through tall grass and dirt, and we parked. We hurriedly grabbed our shit out of Teddy's trunk, all the while keeping an eye for the authority types and crack heads. With our smiles growing in leaps and bounds, Jimi walked off into some woods and motioned for us to follow him. We did. We came out of the woods on a dirt road and took a right. After about a hundred feet we rounded a bend and there it was.

A giant rusted steel pipe stood in front of us, a broken beast of the technological burden. We walked into the beast and looking up we noticed nails welded to the ceiling, starting at about ten and two. This was heavy. After we swept out the leaves and rust-dust, we started. We skated there all day, or at least until Teddy had to go back to work. So we walked back to the car, wet from the heat, orange from rusted steel, and fearing tetanus. And we were all happy because we had just skated an actual full pipe.

bogatchell@hotmail.com

I have to apologize for my last column. The content was pretty much what I wanted, but you guys got the unedited, stream of consciousness version with all the misspellings and uncorrected grammar, etc…and the edited version I intended to print is floating in this computer now. Not that I am embarrassed, but there were some things that bothered me about it. Namely, my Spanish misspelling of the word "mandar." I know it's not that big of a deal and spelling mistakes are common in any language, but language and identity issues are definitely a sore spot for me. It's primarily because, even though Spanish is my first language, there is the fact that I am only half Mexican.

Language has always been my only real segue into the culture upon first appearances, because, I have been told, I do not "look Mexican" enough, which in and of itself is fucked up, but I can't blame people for saying that because it's often a simplistic way of pointing out light skin privilege with which some of my darker skinned blood brothers and sisters have been discriminated against. With that being said, I definitely look Persian, which is the other half of my make up. That may sound odd, but I do. My features, my build, most of me, and there is no denying it. Some time ago, looking Persian meant virtually nothing and, upon appearances, rendered my ethnic heritage an unrecognizable mystery. Now, with the advent of the "Axis of Evil" and the illegally elected, moron Iranian president that the Iranian population is fighting with their lives to get out of office, some are starting to recognize that I am "Middle Eastern." Here in lies the irony: I do not speak Persian (or the more commonly used and culturally neutered term for the language: "Farsi"). So where does that leave me? A first generation, Spanish speaking, Persian looking, Mexican/Persian punk woman? Huh? Que? Chee? Throw in class position, education level, sexual orientation, etc…that's a lot of shit to nail down and, really, how useful will it be in the end? Well, even though the findings in every study to this point seem inconclusive, these questions about intersectionality are not moot because it is agreed that all factors are influential (Renn). So, no matter how advanced punks think they are in US racial issues or if they give a shit or not, Punks still play and pay top dollar for fests that have racist bands on the bill; the evidence points to a long, unavoidable road ahead.

While I could not choose my aforementioned cultural make up, I did choose early on to be part of the punk subculture and I have absolutely no regrets, but I would be lying if I didn't say that all of these identities did not often clash both internally and externally.

Although we almost always get along, I am very aware of how I do not fully fit in with white punks. There was a time that my involvement in a Latino fest was questioned because I am only half Mexican. Although there is a thriving Latino punk community, there are times I definitely feel marginalized, both intentionally and unintentionally, because of my different ethnic experience. Because of my upbringing both here and in Mexico, I tend to culturally identify with the Mexican side of my family a little more than the Persian side and it hurts to be pushed out by a group that you identify so closely with, but it is rage that appears when some very real ethnic struggles are relegated to insignificance. Really, there isn't much of a place anywhere for my Persian identification to punk except perhaps in the Taqwacore scene. Many multicultural people in the US in same situation, sometimes choose the option to accept the identity that is assigned to them by society based on their appearance, but still have to negotiate a cultural landscape "with an appearance that is not always recognizable to others, unwittingly provoking some discomfort until they can answer the "What [race] are you? Questions," (Renn 2004) which happens more often than you think within the group they identify and definitely speeds up the process of figuring out whom you think you are and whom others think you are.

What I can understand is being a combination of the two of the most currently hated ethnicities in this country. I know what you are thinking and, no, I am not relating this to give myself a pity party ("All I wanted was a Pepsi and she wouldn't give it to me."), but what it does give me is perspective. It's complicated, but in my 33 years on this earth, not one day has gone by, or could possibly go by, without navigating through my cultural identity and I, honestly, wouldn't have it any other way.

I realize that even though the specifics of my make up are my own, this cultural wrangling is not. Countless numbers of people have these same struggles and in varying degrees in which location takes a front seat in that battle to understand ones place in their society. I know it's tough all over.

A while back, we received an unfavorable, critical, yet condescending response to a record review. While I could appreciate the insight and interesting, well-informed perspectives offered by the member of this Western European band, I have to say that whenever any European punk makes broad generalizations about Americans, Punk or otherwise, as an explanation for our mistakes, it detracts from any criticism. I guess I say that because being multicultural or "minority" status here, this is the same old shit I have been hearing my whole life. The language that asserts that we don't know about ourselves, that what ever we have learned through our experiences here are not valid unless they fit into a mold which has been exclusively crafted by those who have held institutional power over us. Fuck that. Thousands of years of culture is not trumped by punk and the fact is that it is through great effort that most people of color learn anything about their own histories; some times the white man does not know better than us savages. And, no, this is not the sound of a broken record (ouch!) playing the plight of us "crybaby" minorities, but an on going and reoccurring theme. When Everett V. Stonequist wrote his "authoritative" book on racial development called *The Marginal Man*, he hypothesized that biracial people would only achieve a "marginal" existence, postulating poor mental and physical outcomes (Stonequist, 1937). This book was written at the height of the pseudoscientific eugenics movement with the goal of improving the quality of the human gene pool and accepted as science. Yeah, that was a long time ago, but not until '80s was this theory questioned and that is not a long time ago…

I know damn well that not that all Americans in the US or punks in the US are capable of critical analysis of their country (Tea Party, anyone? Did I mention punks that pay money to fests that have racist bands on the bill?), but to underestimate everyone here with that inability is a disservice to everyone of us that have no choice but to engage in very difficult questions of our place here as "Americans" and people who are here who are not defined a "Americans" due to documentation, language, etc… Let's not forget that there is a large population of the world that identifies as Americans as well that does not live in the United States. The last time I looked at a map, I believe there was a South and Central America and I think there are these fabled Native Americans somewhere…that is sarcasm…

While I can never claim to fully understand any group down to a science, I can honestly tell you that in general, people of color will always know more about white people than they do of us. Blame imbalance of power, but it's true. I have been to parts of Western Europe often and have spent quite a lot of time there and every time I go, I have to prepare for two things. I will probably be one of the few brown people hanging around, specifically of Mexican heritage, and that at some point I will have to defend where I come from. I have been called a "racist bitch", a "George Bush lover," a "mixed blood", a "Zionist," had my Mexican Spanish corrected for me (haha…), been told that I don't understand poverty or war; basically, your typical first world, ignorant white European bullshit and more often than not, by punks. Am I bitter? I really don't think so. I would rather be called a "George Bush Lover" than a "Wet Back" or a "Sand Nigger" (true story…).

The point I am trying to make is that I have learned that these experiences let me know that European punks fall victim to the same ignorance and imperialism that every first world nation is guilty of. Throwing accusations back and forth about the state of our nations will not change the fact that we are somewhat powerless, but that there are places in the world that people have no control at all over their destinies and without the comforts that we have while we are complaining that racism sucks. Punks are no exception and punk maybe an outlet, but it will not shield you or make you exempt from ignorance. What Punk can provide is a place to forget that the world sucks, or a place to destroy yourself, or a place of critical analysis which is why it is important to remember that punk is every where. We are all over the place and no matter how fucked up or lucky your situation is, we will always have music in common, but don't think for a second that class, culture, ethnicity and location can all be wiped out by some "global punk community".

People of color are all different. We have some similar struggles and the ability to empathize with one another in certain situation perhaps better than others, but we are all different and our development is contingent on many factors. What I think is often overlooked when looking at the U$A is that the development of people is different according to your place in society. I know generalizations and stereotypes may be rooted in some truths, but the fact is "minority" and multicultural people develop their identities differently in the US just as they would differ in Russia or in Maldives. This is not to imply that there are no similarities nor am I insinuating that things are tougher here, but to understand the difference, all factors have to be accounted for and patterns noticed. More than anything, privileged people (Western Europeans and beyond) have to know what the fuck they are talking about before making blanket judgments. Just because most punks are anti establishment, doesn't mean they aren't a product of where they come from. Some people run away from that place, others run to it, but in the end, you are just as conditioned as everyone else.

Is there some sort of US American "identity," that exists? Most white Americans here unconsciously manifest ethnic and racial identity because for them "ethnicity is usually invisible and unconscious because societal norms have been constructed around their racial, ethnic and cultural frameworks, values and priorities" (Chavez, Guido-DiBrito 1999) which translates as "Standard American Culture" instead of "ethnic identity." Overall, ethnic and racial identity are critical parts of individual and collective identity framework. Then acknowledge the added pressure of legal and visual definitions of "minority" status here in the US, making our racial and ethnic identities manifested in very conscious and intense ways; it is triggered by conflicting social and cultural issues. We have our cultural identities learned through family and community instilling positive sense of self, which must then be filtered through negative social treatment and media that paints us in an undesirable light. What it comes down to is that here in the US, "these messages make it clear that people with minority status have a different ethnic make-up and one that is less desirable within mainstream society" (Chavez, Guido-DiBrito 1999). Ok, now throw punk on top of that. What you get is groups of unconscious and hyper conscious punks in varying degrees of identity development, all pissed off and all fed up. Mistakes are made, dumb shit is said (S.O.D), and horns lock.

I bet some people do wonder why we stay here if we are so against the odds. Ok, then tell me where things are utopia and I will pack my bags because I am fairly fucking sure that racism exists everywhere, even in Western Europe … more sarcasm…

If you are a punk that really wants to learn about "minority" and multicultural development (there is so much I left out, its sort of embarrassing), read some WC Poston, Lorde, Renn, Chavez and a whole host of other hardworking, cutting edge people that are making some awesome discoveries. If you don't give a shit and just want to party, no problem, I understand that too. I can have a beer or root beer with anyone. We don't have to talk about politics or racism or all that other shit that some punks think is played out, but if we are friends, we can check each other with respect on things that bother us. Meaning I probably don't want to hear about how you know what poverty feels like cuz you backpacked to Oaxaca last summer (I will slap the shit out of you). Otherwise, punk is more resilient and dynamic than any of us, so if you want to be part of the growth and the different faces that make up what punk looks like now, come along or keep your "ironic" bullshit to yourself. Stand up or step aside. The face of hardcore has changed.

Random stuff:

My heart goes out to Spiral Scratch Record store that was victim to an electrical fire some weeks ago. I hope that you are up and running again soon.

Check out www. radiobronka.info/escuchar for access to some awesome radio shows from Spain and more!

Pedal screen printing moved to Houston (while the other partner was on tour. Where I come from we would call that shady, sleazy and trifling…), but the other partner and master printer, Biff is still in Buffalo and has teamed up with Alex from Lemuria to keep cranking out the quality work that you can see on the Pedal Printing website. The new company is called Argy Bargy!

Also, if you send me a blank tape (to the *MRR* PO Box, Attention: Merm's Mix Tape) I will copy a mix tape that was inspired by a now dead crush. Don't worry, just cuz it was crush inspired does not mean the mix lacks brutality and good jams. Hardcore = romance! (I love Hardcore boys / I love boys hardcore!)

The new Vile Gash EP and the new Los Monjo EP are fucking killer.

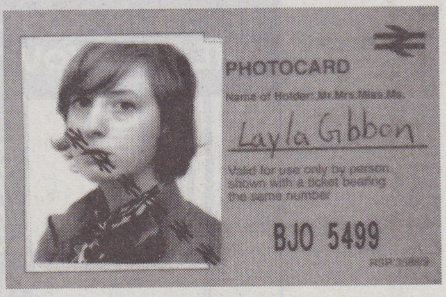
Cited material:

*Research on Biracial and Multiracial Identity Development: Overview and Synthesis* by Kristen A. Renn

*Racial and Ethnic Identity and Development* by Alicia Fedelina Chavez, Florence Guido-DiBrito

*The Marginal Man* by Everett V. Stonequist

Laters! mariam@maximumrocknroll.com




This is a collection of random things that sprung into my brains. This is not an epic Greek poem, or a Victorian novel, this is not New Journalism, this is not bathroom graffiti. Random brains. Brain springs. We tried to watch the bio-pic cheezecore movie about Dogtown—not the Stacey Peralta documentary, but the movie with actors aping it. It was the sort of movie that whilst watching you wondered how no one involved realized how stupid and corny it was. As a punk I love teensploitation movies, from *River's Edge* to *Foxes*, *Out of the Blue* to *Ladies and Gentlemen the Fabulous Stains*, but I was not able to transmit this love into the transformation of belief required to finish watching the absolute soiled turkey that was *Lords of Dogtown*. Someone ollies out of their second story bedroom in one of the first scenes, an act of very believable activity for this era of skate-

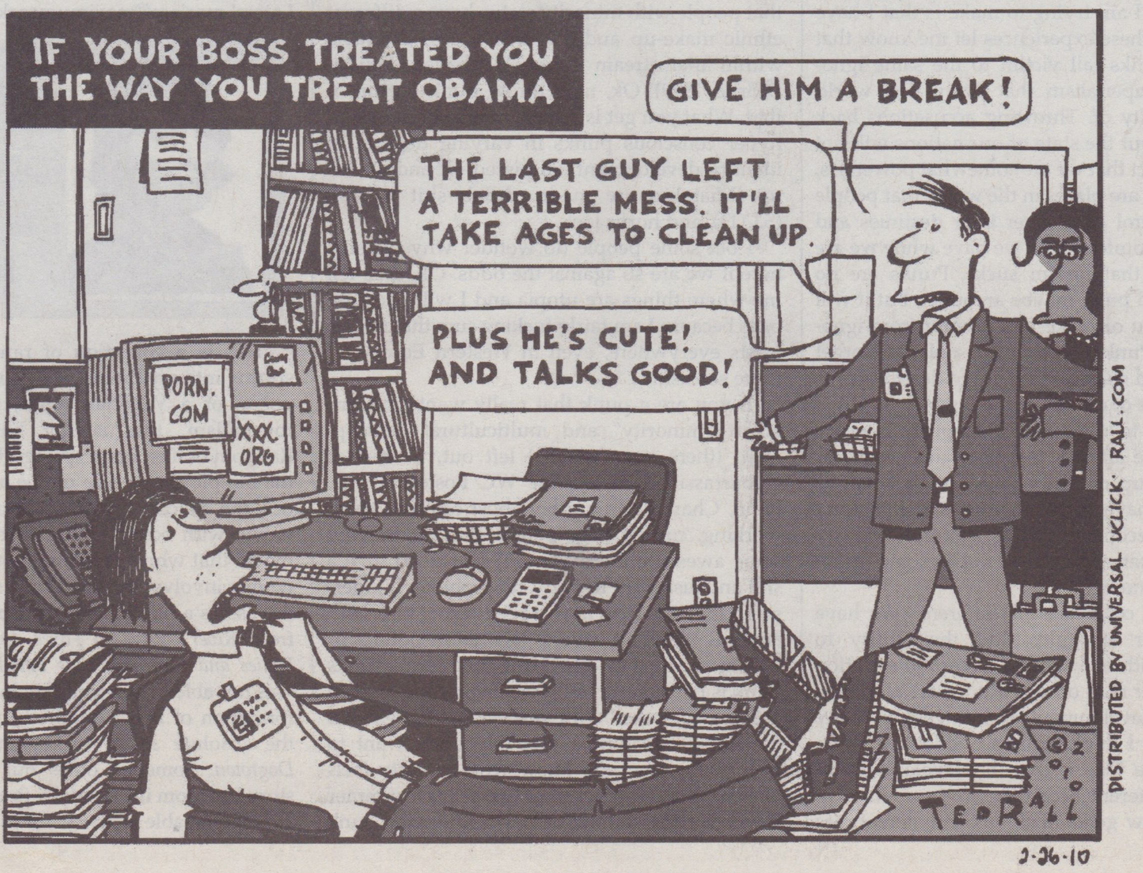
boarding especially on a banana board. I didn't go see the Germs movie or *American Hardcore;* I probably shoulda seen the latter just for big screen dynamic eye catching ferocious footage of best bands ever. I just got so annoyed by the book I figured the movie would feature that idiot that wrote it in such a way that I might need to rip my eyeballs out after viewing. Maybe movies about culture that you feel a part of that are made for mainstream appeal should just be avoided unless it's the midnite movie and you got a crew of rowdies? "That guy would *not* have been wearing a Misfits shirt! Jeez... what year is this supposed to be etc etc etc" At any rate, what do you guys this about the Tater Totz 7" that Cherie Currie sings on? That also has that insane Pat Smear led overblown cover of "Bohemian Rhapsody"?

When I first starting doing shitwork at *MRR* there was some random hippie dirge carved into the sidewalk in front of the house. Something about the spiral tribe? The viral tribe? I have forgotten what it said exactly but it included a shitty mosaic that an angry punk smashed at some point. The city redid the sidewalk, not before a scam punk carved something marking his or her presence... And someone across the street has carved in a selection of sidewalk penises. Or penii? Sidewalk messages. I am currently sitting in my room listening to the Sublime Frequency reissue of Dara Puspita, an insanely good Indonesian all girl garage band from the '60s. On headphones... Looking through the booklet that came with the CD and reading about how these musicians suffered for their art via brutal government oppression, weekly grillings, where they were forced to play their hits to assorted officials who would deem whether a song was too wild for the youth of Indonesia... and yet their music is at once liberated sounding, fun and refreshing. The music is sorta *Girls in the Garage* stylee, except these girls actually played their instruments, they were not just dollybird frontgirls with faceless session musicians or puppets performing some small town producer's idea of rocknroll. Some of the music borrows hooks from contemporary western rocknroll songs, but they totally transform it into their own sound somehow... Cool.

I have been, as always, been thinking about girl sounds. *MRR* puts on a show one a month (third Thursday at Balazo!) and this month I think nearly every band had a female musician—one, Mothercountry Motherfuckers, wore masks so I was unable to discern gender. Genderpolice. In the style of previous Mike Kirsch bands witnessed by these eyes, they had a full multi media projection thing behind them and a sorta NOU-ish manifesto band thing going. I like it a lot more than Baader Brains and am excited to get a hold of a tape or other recorded artifact when it surfaces. Former member of John Henry West! No Statik are a reasonably new Bay Area band, I mighta written about them before? Not sure, at any rate I believe a record is to appear on Prank soon enough, but you can and should send off for the demo before that. So good. Most raging female local fronted hardcore since Look Back and Laugh? Possibly, could be due to the ex member of... The ex member of list for this band is sorta epic, but let's just say they play tight and raging hardcore at volumes and with vigor that make paying attention to anything else futile. Then there was the incredible Necro Hippies show at Thrillhouse, which also featured Diane's new band Livid, (Diane, soon to be former distro coordinator of this thing you currently hold... More on that in a bit), Livid were the best kind of basement punk, with the most compelling frontwoman, total Alice Bag delivery… The rest of the band had their own rhythm and idea of punk, so it made for a most killer combination with the snarled and stuttered vocals. Really had a most enchanting Dangerhouse situation and the idea that they have just recorded a tape makes this girl extremely happy for the state of Bay Area music. And yep, you read right, Diane is leaving the distribution coordinator position at *MRR;* Fred Schrunk of Thrillhouse Records will be taking over, starting in July, so if you wanna start selling *MRR* at shows or at your skate shop you should email distro@maximumrocknroll.com. Fred rules and is a long time architect of San Francisco punk, setting up the collectively run all volunteer record store and sometime show space Thrillhouse, and also tirelessly searching for a new and legit all ages space for San Francisco. We are super excited to have him as part of the coordinator power trifecta. Back to the show—Necro Hippies ruled, playing trashed out basement hardcore, timeless and true. They have a record on Raw Sugar records out of New Orleans, where they are from, and Candice, the guitarist is involved in a cool all girls show collective No More Fiction… Hardcore for the hardcore.

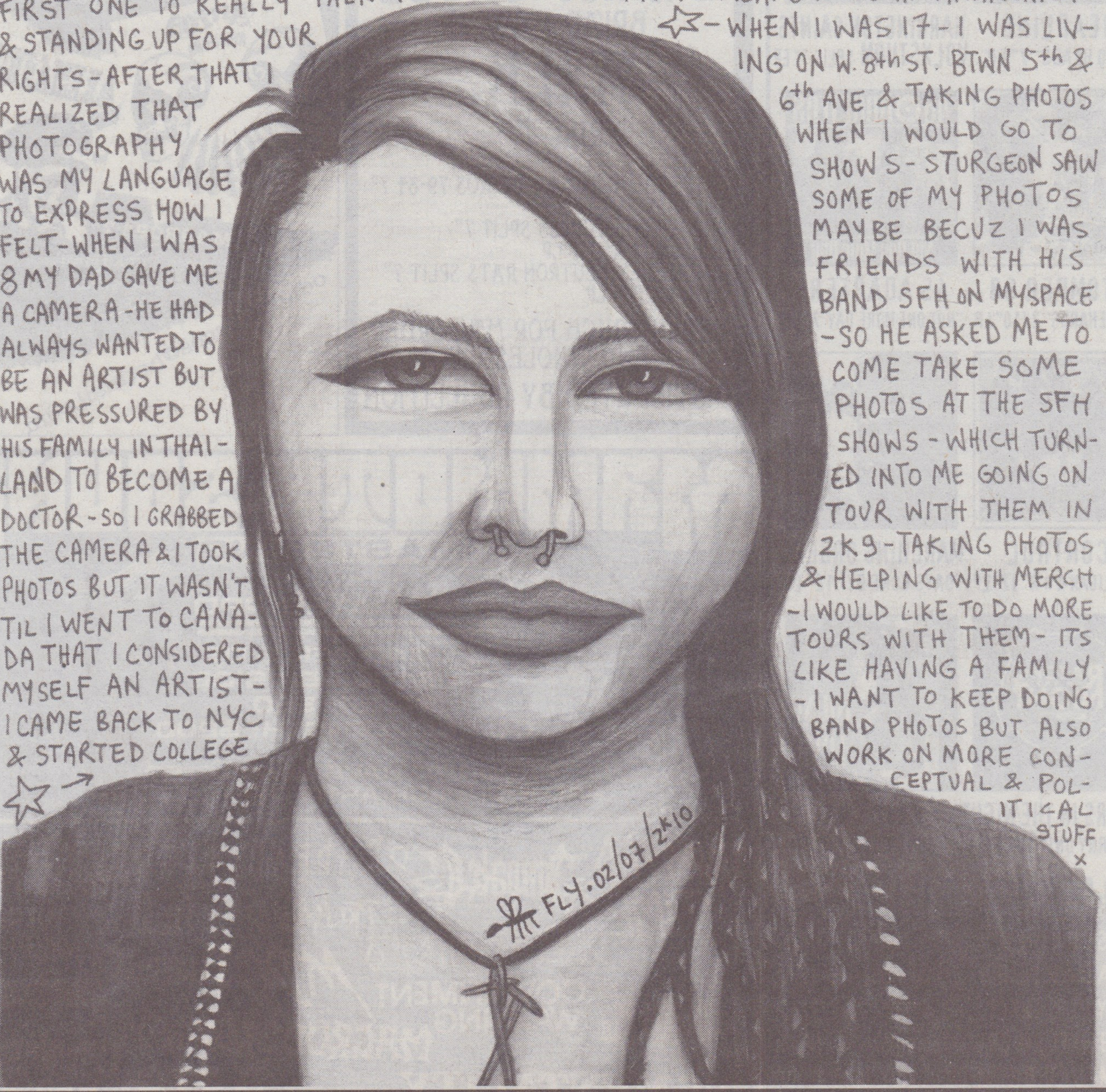
Anyway-listen to the song "Chronic Thoughts" by Malefice, and I promise next month this column will be less a collection of brain sewage and more a cohesive dissertation of reality.

layla@maximumrocknroll.com
whatwewantisfree.blogspot.com



I WAS BORN ON STATEN ISLAND IN 1989 - I WAS PRETTY MUCH RAISED ROMAN CATHOLIC MY WHOLE LIFE WITH AN ITALIAN FAMILY - MY DAD IS ASIAN & MY MOM IS ITALIAN - ITS LIKE BEING RAISED IN A BIG BUBBLE - ON STATEN ISLAND - IF YOU DON'T LOOK A CERTAIN WAY OR THINK A CERTAIN WAY YOU ARE DISREGARDED SO I ALWAYS HAD THE IDEA THAT I WAS DIFFERENT BUT IN A NEGATIVE WAY - I GUESS WHEN I WAS 12 OR 13 I DISCOVERED BASEMENT SHOWS - NEW BRUNSWICK NEW JERSEY WAS 20 MINUTES AWAY - SO I WENT TO LOTS OF SHOWS THERE IN SMELLY BASEMENTS - IT WAS LIKE 180° FROM STATEN ISLAND MENTALITY - I HUNG OUT WITH THE "WRONG KIDS" & DEVELOPED A BAD COKE HABIT AT AGE 14 SO THEN MY PARENTS CUT ME OFF FROM EVERYTHING - AT AGE 16 I RAN AWAY DURING THE SUMMER & WENT TO MONTREAL CANADA - I MET THIS PAINTER NAMED TOURNÉ SOL - HE WAS MORE FOCUSED & POLITICAL - HE WAS THE FIRST ONE TO REALLY TALK TO ME ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ANARCHIST & STANDING UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS - AFTER THAT I REALIZED THAT PHOTOGRAPHY WAS MY LANGUAGE TO EXPRESS HOW I FELT - WHEN I WAS 8 MY DAD GAVE ME A CAMERA - HE HAD ALWAYS WANTED TO BE AN ARTIST BUT WAS PRESSURED BY HIS FAMILY IN THAILAND TO BECOME A DOCTOR - SO I GRABBED THE CAMERA & I TOOK PHOTOS BUT IT WASN'T TIL I WENT TO CANADA THAT I CONSIDERED MYSELF AN ARTIST - I CAME BACK TO NYC & STARTED COLLEGE ☆ →

☆ - WHEN I WAS 17 - I WAS LIVING ON W. 8th ST. BTWN 5th & 6th AVE & TAKING PHOTOS WHEN I WOULD GO TO SHOWS - STURGEON SAW SOME OF MY PHOTOS MAYBE BECUZ I WAS FRIENDS WITH HIS BAND SFH ON MYSPACE - SO HE ASKED ME TO COME TAKE SOME PHOTOS AT THE SFH SHOWS - WHICH TURNED INTO ME GOING ON TOUR WITH THEM IN 2K9 - TAKING PHOTOS & HELPING WITH MERCH - I WOULD LIKE TO DO MORE TOURS WITH THEM - ITS LIKE HAVING A FAMILY - I WANT TO KEEP DOING BAND PHOTOS BUT ALSO WORK ON MORE CONCEPTUAL & POLITICAL STUFF ×

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ALYSSA IS A BRILLIANT & ENTHUSIASTIC YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER - I FIRST MET HER WHEN SHE WAS SITTING AT THE MERCH TABLE AT A STAR FUCKING HIPSTERS SHOW AT GILMAN IN MARCH OF 2K9 & SHE WAS SHOOTING PHOTOS AT THE SAME TIME - THIS SUMMER SHE IS ON THE ROAD WITH SFH IN EUROPE & MAYBE SOUTH WEST USA & OF COURSE SHE WILL BE PHOTOGRAPHING CONSTANTLY ON THE TOUR - CHECK OUT HER WORK HERE - ALYSSATANCHAJJA.COM - TO CONTACT FLY EMAIL FLY@PEOPS.ORG (PUT MRR IN THE TITLE SO I KNOW IT'S NOT SPAM) - CHECK THE STILL IN CONSTRUCTION WEBSITE - WWW.PEOPS.ORG - NEW PEOPS #5 ZINE NOW AVAILABLE!!! - YOU CAN FIND FLY ZINES AT WWW.MICROCOSMPUBLISHING.COM OR SEND $4 PP (USA ONLY) TO FLY PO BOX 1318 COOPER STN NYC NY 10276

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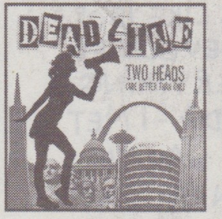


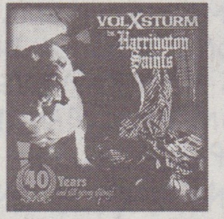


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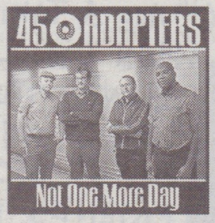


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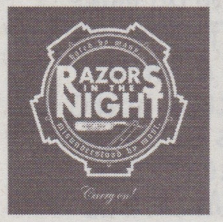


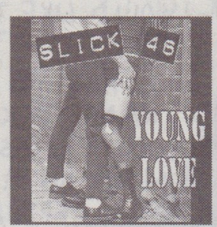


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# NEWS

MRR NEWS COMPILED By Chris Pugmire and Mariam Bastani

## GULF OIL SPILL NOW FAR WORSE THAN EXXON VALDEZ, WORST IN U.S. HISTORY, SCIENTISTS SAY

*Huffington Post*

COVINGTON, LA. — An untested procedure to plug the blown-out oil well in the Gulf of Mexico seemed to be working, officials said Thursday, but new estimates showed the spill has already surpassed the Exxon Valdez as the worst in US history. A team of scientists trying to determine how much oil has been flowing since the offshore rig Deepwater Horizon exploded April 20 and sank two days later found the rate was more than twice and possibly up to five times as high as previously thought.

The fallout from the spill has stretched all the way to Washington, where the head of the federal agency that oversees offshore drilling resigned Thursday and President Barack Obama sought to counter criticism by announcing a series of new steps to deal with the spill's aftermath. Even using the most conservative estimate, the new numbers mean the leak has grown to nearly 19 million gallons over the past five weeks. If the oil filled gallon milk jugs lined up side by side, there would be enough to reach from New York to Chicago and back.

In the worst case scenario, if 39 million gallons has spilled, the oil would fill enough jugs to stretch from the Louisiana marshes to Prince William Sound in Alaska. That's where the Exxon Valdez ran aground in 1989, spilling nearly 11 million gallons.

"Now we know the true scale of the monster we are fighting in the Gulf," said Jeremy Symons, vice president of the National Wildlife Federation. "BP has unleashed an unstoppable force of appalling proportions." BP and the Coast Guard estimated soon after the explosion that about 210,000 gallons a day was leaking, but scientists who watched underwater video of well had been saying for weeks it was probably more.

US Geological Survey Director Marcia McNutt said two different teams of scientists calculated the well has been spewing between 504,000 and more than a million gallons a day.

BP spokesman Steve Rinehart said the previous estimate came from industry experts and scientists based on the best data available at the time. Asked for the company's response to the new numbers, he replied: "It does not and will not change the response. We are going all out on our response. This is an all-out response and we're doing everything we can to stop this."

Marine scientists also said Thursday they have discovered a massive new plume of what they believe to be oil deep beneath the Gulf, stretching 22 miles from the leaking wellhead northeast toward Mobile Bay, Ala. The discovery by researchers on the University of South Florida College of Marine Science's Weatherbird II vessel is the second significant undersea plume recorded since the rig exploded.

Last week, BP inserted a mile-long tube to siphon some of the oil from the gushing well into a tanker. It sucked up 924,000 gallons, but engineers had to dismantle it so they could start the risky procedure known as a top kill to try to cut off the flow altogether by shooting heavy drilling fluid into the well. If that works, BP will inject cement into the well to seal it. The top kill has been used above ground but has never been tried 5,000 feet beneath the sea. BP pegged its chance of success at 60 to 70 percent, and Obama cautioned that it "offers no guarantee of success."

Lt. Commander Tony Russell, an aide to Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, said Thursday the mud was stopping some oil and gas but had a ways to go before it proved successful. The top kill started Wednesday night.

"As you inject your mud into it, it is going to stop some hydrocarbons," Russell said. "That doesn't mean it's successful."

In Washington, meanwhile, Minerals Management Service Director Elizabeth Birnbaum stepped down from the job she has held since July 2009. Her agency has come under withering criticism from lawmakers of both parties over lax oversight of drilling and cozy ties with industry.

An internal Interior Department report released earlier this week found that between 2000 and 2008, agency staff members accepted tickets to sports events, lunches and other gifts from oil and gas companies and used government computers to view pornography. Polls show the public is souring on the administration's handling of the catastrophe, and Obama sought Thursday to assure Americans that the government is in control. He was responding to criticism that his administration had been slow to act and left BP in charge of plugging the leak. He announced that a new moratorium on drilling permits will be extended for six months. He also said he was suspending planned exploration drilling off the coasts of Alaska and Virginia and on 33 wells currently being drilled in the Gulf of Mexico. He said many critics failed to realize "this has been our highest priority" but conceded that "people are going to be frustrated until it stops."

Fishermen, hotel and restaurant owners, politicians and residents along the 100-mile stretch of Gulf coast affected by the spill are also fed up with BP's failures to stop the spill. Thick oil is coating birds and delicate wetlands along the Louisiana coast.

"I have anxiety attacks," said Sarah Rigaud, owner of Sarah's Restaurant in Grand Isle, La., where the public beach was closed because blobs of oil that looked like melted chocolate had washed up on shore. "Every day I pray that something happens, that it will be stopped and everybody can get back to normal."

Seven cleanup crew members who reported dizziness, severe headaches and nausea while working in boats off the Louisiana coast remained hospitalized Thursday. The Coast Guard pulled commercial fishing boats from cleanup efforts in Breton Sound on Wednesday after workers first reported feeling sick.

If the top kill fails, BP says it has several backup plans. The only permanent solution is drilling a second well, but that will take a couple of months. BP plans to go ahead with that even if the top kill works.

Though the spill is now the biggest in US history, it's not the biggest ever in the Gulf. An offshore drilling rig in Mexican waters – the Ixtoc I – blew up in June 1979, releasing 140 million gallons of oil.

# "UGLY DIVORCE REFORM BILL THREATENS VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE"

*By June Carbone from New Economic Perspectives*

Kansas City Star headlines recently announced what those in the field have long known: a tough economy increases the incidence of domestic violence and depletes the resources available to combat it.

What has received less attention is a new Missouri bill that would make matters worse.

House Bill 1234 claims to promote "heterosexual marriage" by making divorce more difficult; what it really does is to strip away hard-won protections for the victims of domestic violence. Indeed, the bill's proposals are so one-sided, it should be renamed "The Full Protection of Batterers Act." The proposals start by limiting divorce to cases of mutual consent or "marital irresponsibility." Marital irresponsibility, however, includes domestic abuse only in cases of "serious spousal abuse involving injury to petitioner where petitioner was not the initiator of physical violence" or a "history of serious emotional or physical abuse."

Consider what this means. Husband and wife argue. Husband threatens to kill the wife, and beats her up so badly she ends up in the hospital. Wife sues for divorce. The husband insists that the wife slapped him first (a common allegation whether true or not) and that the episode of "serious" abuse was an isolated incident. Wife, in the hospital with a skull fracture, has no grounds for divorce.

The bill gets worse. It mandates that the assertion of domestic violence "shall not be deemed credible in the absence of physical evidence or convincing testimony by parties unrelated to the spouses." Consider again what this means. The wife returns home from the hospital. The husband repeatedly threatens her, slaps her without leaving bruises, grabs her and holds her by the neck in front of the teenage children, and tells her in front of his mother and her sister that if she leaves him, she will never see the children again.

This woman has no grounds for divorce. Her testimony, however convincing, is deemed not to be "credible" as a matter of law. The testimony of the children, his mother and her sister (all relatives) do not matter.

The proposed legislation also makes it more difficult to protect children. Impressive empirical evidence demonstrates that exposing children to domestic abuse has lifelong negative consequences even if the abuse is directed only at the spouse.

In response to these studies, every state in the country has expanded the ability of the courts to take domestic violence into account in determining custody. This bill would undo the protections. It provides that even if a spouse meets the act's tough standards and proves domestic violence to the satisfaction of the court, "a protective order shall not deny the [abuser] parenting time if the petition for dissolution does not allege child abuse or neglect."

In other words, if the husband cracks open his wife's skull, but does not touch the children, he cannot be denied parenting time. And the new definitions of child abuse are even harder to prove than spousal abuse. Punching and hitting children is not physical abuse unless it causes injury.

Moreover, if repeatedly striking a child causes injury only rarely, it is not abuse where it can be said to be an "infrequent" mistake or a manifestation of parental differences about appropriate discipline. Yet, interfering with the other spouse's parenting time because the children are terrified is emotional abuse, while threatening to kill a child becomes abuse only if it is "continuing and chronic."

Finally, the bill punishes spouses who allege domestic abuse, but fail to prove it under these draconian standards. To take only one example, the proposed legislation would threaten a spouse who alleges domestic violence with loss of custody if the court does not find in her favor, while a battering spouse who commits perjury is guaranteed continuing contact with the children unless he has been separately found guilty of child abuse. Taken together, these measures provide a handbook on how to inflict domestic terror with impunity. The bill threatens all of us as it puts the cycle of violence that brutalizes parents and children outside of public view – until the violence tragically erupts in ways that are impossible to ignore.

## RIP Lisa Hodapp

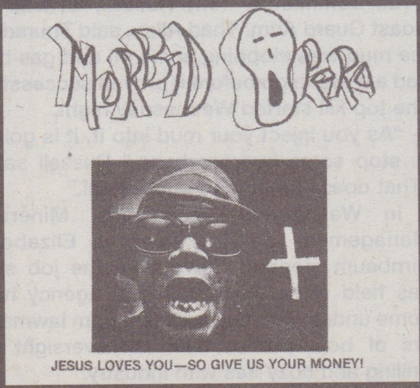
*By Ivy Jeanne*

Lisa Hodapp was a huge inspiration and a punk rock role model to so many people including myself.

As a teenage punk girl growing up in South Florida in the late eighties/early nineties, I sometimes felt like the "scene" was a virtual wasteland for girls and women getting into punk rock. It felt exclusive and full of machismo, a real boy's club.

Discovering Morbid Opera was a huge turning point for me during that time. I loved their record so much I'd listen to it on repeat much to the chagrin of some of my friends! In listening to that record, I heard a sound so raw, so strong and so female. I heard the possibilities.

Morbid Opera and other bands with ladies playing in them, made it feel possible for me to follow suit. I've been playing in bands ever since, 19 years and counting. In the mid-nineties, I had the pleasure of meeting Lisa and after much bonding, a friendship was formed.



JESUS LOVES YOU—SO GIVE US YOUR MONEY!

She was always so supportive to the younger generations that came up after her. Unjaded and enthusiastic, Lisa was always ready to start a new musical project and to make new friends. She blew minds with her multi-faceted life, a bad ass rocker, a whip-smart lawyer, and a mother to boot. In the mid-nineties, there was a brief time that Morbid Opera reformed and she asked me to join to sing backups. It was a real dream come true! Lisa was still rocking, her latest project was called Fraulein.

It's always so hard to lose someone so vivacious to an illness as epidemic as cancer. There are so many unspokens. Let's start the conversations on how we can truly love and support each other when we get sick. It means everything.

As Lisa leaves us, she leaves us with a little bit of fire, sharpened wits, a real tenderness and a desire to push for something more, to create something more.

# Thailand: Army Brings Death and Carnage to the Streets

*By Sian Powell in Bangkok from Times Online*

A day of violence on the streets of the Thai capital left at least ten dead and 125 wounded after renewed fighting erupted in the city's commercial heart yesterday. Soldiers fired bullets and teargas into the fortified encampment held for weeks by anti-government protesters, and street battles erupted in the city centre.

What began in early March as a defiant and proud rally intended to oust the Thai Government peacefully and fight for social justice had, by last night, largely unravelled as the army strengthened its stranglehold around thousands of diehard protesters. Hemmed into their fortified encampment by troops, the remaining protesters digested the grim information that several of their leaders had quit. As long as the security forces remain loyal to the Government their options appear increasingly limited in the face of the army's firepower.

From dawn on May 14, 2010, the protest site centred on Ratchaprasong intersection in central Bangkok was surrounded by armed troops and police officers in armoured vehicles. They fired live rounds and rubber bullets as well as teargas at members of the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship. The group has spent weeks in the centre of one of Asia's most cosmopolitan cities demanding the dissolution of the Thai parliament, followed by elections.

Known widely as the Red Shirts, the demonstrators responded with petrol bombs and fired home-made rockets into the streets surrounding the upmarket district that they have occupied for nearly six weeks. Several thousand Red Shirts were still behind the high barricades of the site perimeter last night, protected by guards carrying thick bamboo staves. From the stage in the centre of the demonstration some Red Shirt leaders were still shouting their defiance at the unseen presence of the encircling troops. Sean Boonpracong, a Red Shirt spokesman, confirmed the movement's leadership had fissured. "Four leaders have decided to leave," he told The Times. "Veera Musikhapong has resigned from the chairmanship. But there were still 16 leaders meeting here this afternoon." Even so, it was becoming apparent that the Red Shirts were losing control. Black smoke billowed from the bamboo and car tyre barricades at the southern end of the site. A bus had been set on fire near Sala Daeng station.

Earlier, sporadic explosions and gunfire had echoed through the area. Red Shirts near Lumpini Park faced shots from troops wedging their weapons through the distant park railings. The protesters hid behind flimsy tents and offered the journalists with them face masks as protection against the expected teargas. Two hospital gurneys were rattled around the back of the stage, one bearing an apparently wounded protester, the other a dead one. Kannanat Pijitkadipol had seen the pair taken to first one hospital, then raced through the protest site on their way to Bangkok's Police Hospital. Weeping, she said that she thought that at least one of them was dead. "I saw them at the hospital," she said. "It's very bad."

Three journalists were hit by bullets; two Thai photographers and Nelson Rand, a Canadian working for France24 television, who was seriously wounded by gunshots to the abdomen.

Across Bangkok military and police roadblocks screened traffic and various embassies were closed — including the British compound, which is near to the protest site. The attempted assassination on Thursday of Khattiya Sawasdipol, the renegade general and Red Shirt security leader, who was shot in the head while being interviewed by journalists inside the encampment, appeared to be the catalyst for the Government to take a harder line. Better known as Seh Daeng (Commander Red), General Khattiya had been a divisive figure in the movement and one implacably opposed to reconciliation. A doctor yesterday told Thai media that the general's chances of survival were low.

Despite the Red Shirts' fear that an all-out military assault was imminent, pushing them to ask for a ceasefire, an army spokesman insisted that no comprehensive military attacks had been planned to retake the site. "We will allow protesters to leave the area today," Sansern Kaewkamnerd told reporters, adding that authorities were trying to seal off the encampment, cut off the Red Shirts' supplies and limit the crowd size. The military cordon around the camp is the result of weeks of brinkmanship, violence and failed negotiation.

Panitan Wattanayagorn, the Government's official spokesman, appeared on national television to insist that the military's actions in opening fire had been justified because of the protesters' "clear intention" to attack. "The soldiers, the police and the civilian officers had no choice but to respond to these attacks by adopting the rules of engagement," he said, adding that according to the rules, live ammunition could be used only for self-defence, to protect other officers or the public, or to fire into the air. He warned of potential instability in Bangkok but added that it would be dealt with by the security forces. "We hope that in the next few days Thailand will return to normalcy," he said.

The Government has tried in vain to persuade the protesters, mostly supporters of the deposed former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, to return to their homes, predominantly in the poor north and northeast. Mr Thaksin was told by the tiny Balkan nation of Montenegro, where he is living, that he was not permitted to use the nation as a base for sending political messages to Thailand.

The protesters have proved remarkably resilient and the thousands-strong protest has maintained momentum with non-stop amplified speeches, free food and shelter, and the promise of a better Thailand.

Abhisit Vejjajiva, the Prime Minister, recently offered to hold an election this year, 12 months before it is due, but the protesters insisted that they would not disperse until the Deputy Prime Minister was arrested and charged for ordering a previous military crackdown in April that left 25 people dead. Mr Abhisit has withdrawn the offer of an election but he has said that he will still work towards reconciliation.

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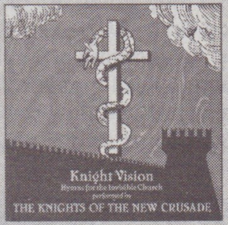


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# CALGARY SCENE REPORT

Photos and text Damien Inbred

*Hey folks out there in the real world. It's been a long time since there's been a scene report for Calgary, and our scene's at its strongest point in almost a decade, so now is the perfect time to spread the word!*

*People probably only know of Calgary as the home of the world's largest rodeo (the Stampede, y'all), or the center of Canada's oil industry; lots of rednecks and conservative scum. Well, the stereotypes definitely have their place, but an oppressive environment such as this often breeds a healthy alternative. Now, when I say that the scene is at it's strongest point now, I should make the disclaimer that we're still pretty divided. There are a couple of factions that have virtually nothing to do with each other. Since this is MRR, and since I have little interest in the more reactionary bar scene, this scene report will focus mainly on the DIY/all-ages scene here in town. I guarantee I'll probably forget a bunch of stuff, so I apologize in advance. If I forgot you, please email me and I'll make the proper correction in the letters page, and I'll make sure not to forget you in my next installment! My email's at the bottom...*

BANDS:

Our part of Canaduh is known primarily for its beef industry. Animals here are seen as a commodity, as opposed to sentient beings. This is the general mentality that's prevailed for generations. Thankfully, we have a strongly vegan band to offer a militant alternative point of view! LAB RAT is a militantly vegan fastcore band who have taken the scene by storm! Their point of view may be extreme to some, but they're still a bunch of nice kids who're sick of our culture of animal cruelty. They're putting out their first LP soon, and going on a cross-Canada tour soon! If you like powerviolence and veganism, check these cats out!

Closely associated with LAB RAT is a new feminist, straightedge, vegetarian grindcore band called RAPE REVENGE. I saw them at a house show for the first time a few months ago, and I was completely blown away. They're brutal, in-yer-face, and tight as hell. They remind me of a more brutal THINK DON'T PRAY, combined with a faster KURSK. They will be touring with LAB RAT this spring. I urge you to check them out — you won't be disappointed, and hopefully they'll make you think.

A newer band on the grind/hardcore horizon is WAKE. They play brutal technical grind with elements of epic hardcore. They just put out a 7" called Surrounded By Human Filth, and just finished a west coast tour. Not too shabby for a band that only played their first show a couple of months ago! The 7" kills, and will probably destroy you. Check it.

The best band in Calgary right now is the SPASTIC PANTHERS! No frills punk rock with the best rhythm section in town! They sound like the best of '80s North American hardcore updated for our day and age. Following the demise of his old band SHEGLANK'D SHOULDERS, singer Dan Izzo and former SHOULDERS bassist Todd got together and stole the drummer and bassist from the ANTISOCIAL CLUB (r.i.p.). Now Todd rocks a six-string, and Izzo rocks too many tattoos. They've got a 7" out, Rock N Roll Beasts, and they just put out a split 7" with THE THROWAWAYS. Check this shit out: www.handsomedanrecords.com

THE THROWAWAYS fucking rule. They say that they suck, but they're just being modest. Fuzzed-out powerpop/garage punk with a healthy dose of bubblegum and attitude! Two ladies and a dude. Three cute punk rockers. Awesome sound, they get bonus points for doing something that nobody else in town is doing. Their split with THE SPASTIC PANTHERS is out now, and you should really get it.

Another rad group of punk rock youngsters to check out is THE WASTOIDS. I first saw them a couple years ago, and I was impressed with how tight they were, and how much they love '80s hardcore. I heard a lot of early California influences, but updated for the here and now. They have a full-length coming out, which promises to be awesome.

Another killer young band with the classics in their hearts would be POINT BREAK. They've been around for a few years now, and can be counted on to destroy a basement or living room every once in a while. Their self-titled 7" has been out for a while now, and I highly recommend it.

MADCOWBOYS play pop punk with a heart of gold! The mid '90s California sound with some intelligence behind them. They dig vegetarian food, animals, beer, and basement shows. They've got a new CD out, and it's rad. Check 'em.

For over fifteen years now, KNUCKLEHEAD has been kicking out the jams. They formed in high school, and I don't think any of them would have thought they'd still be rocking this one-horse town in 2010! Over the years they've added members and solidified their sound. They play anthemic working class punk in the vein of the BELTONES, SWINGIN' UTTERS, and even (dare I say it?) COCK SPARRER. New album coming soon!

Due to bad timing, one of the best bands here in town, RUM RUNNER, got pigeonholed into the unfortunate Celt-punk subgenre. After all these years, people still call these guys a fucking Celtic band. No! They are not! This is bluesy, rootsy, punk noir. Whiskey-drenched vocals, jangly guitars, and a fucking banjo. This is class-A stuff. They've got a new full-length out, which is arguably the best

wastoids

rum runner

stuff they've written yet... and I'm not just saying that because I'm on the album either!

The FALLING PIANOS are the brainchild of Spencer from RUM RUNNER. They play folky punk with legitimate Celtic influences. They've actually been around for a while, going back to Spencer's high school days. Woah. Getting' old here. There's a lot of talent here, folks. Way too fucking talented for their own good.

ZINES:

Finally! We're getting a zine culture here in Calgary! Just a few years ago, my zine Body Count was the only zine coming out (rarely). But now, we have a zine library maintained by Samantha, of RAPE REVENGE fame, who puts out a really good perzine of her own, Trees. There's a lot of good stuff coming out, I can't even keep track anymore! Punk zines, comic zines, personal zines. It seems that every month, there's a new crop. That's a very good thing.

On a self-promotion note, I have two new issues of my zine coming out this summer. Rad.

VENUES:

There are actually a couple of all-ages venues now, which certainly helps us out! Every time we lose a venue, the scene starts to flounder and dry up, so it's nice that we have a few places to choose from.

Located in Inglewood (which I guess counts as "inner-city"), The New Black actually used to be a candy shop, upstairs from some less-cool business. This place opened up and became active last spring. There were some license issues with the city, and the venue almost got shut down. Thankfully it worked out in our favor!

Hot damn! In the wake of some of our popular venues going the way of the dinosaur, the best all-ages shows have been happening at a Hot Dog Stand! Yeah! Tubby Dog! Woah! Best shows ever – free admission, (donations for the bands are definitely appreciated), gourmet hot dogs (meat and meatless), and beer for the older folks. And it's right on 17th Ave SW, so you really can't go wrong.

Apparently a new place just opened up a few months ago called ComRad Sound on 14th St SW. However, I don't know too much about it, and I don't even think they've had any shows yet. We shall see how it goes.

As far as bars go, the best place to see live music in town is definitely Broken City, even though it's kinda hipster-y. Oh well – good beers on tap, and the best veggie burger in town. Plus punk-rock bingo on Tuesday nights. Kill!

knucklehead

PUNK FUEL (coffee) JOINTS:

Roasterie: This place is legendary. In the middle of the trendy, yuppie hellhole of Kensington, this is a haven for all sorts of freaks. Probably the only place where you can find conspiracy nuts, skinheads, zinesters, hippie burnouts, train-hoppers, punks, ravers and well-to-do yuppies all getting along and trading stories among each other. In the age of Starbucks and Tim Horton's, places like this are necessary.

Café Beano: Sort of the same deal, except it's along 17th Ave, a good mix of people and great prices. Oh yeah, they're open until midnight, which is perfect for the likes of me...

My fucking house: If you don't suck, I'll probably offer you a cup of coffee ground with cinnamon bark and then yap at you for hours about all sorts of crap.

RECORD STORES:

Sloth: This is Calgary's number one stop for punk, hardcore, hip-hop, indie, etc. Great location, great people, a pretty decent selection of stuff at pretty good prices. It ain't perfect, but we have little else.

Melodiya: Connected to a comic book shop on upper 17th Ave near the old Children's Hospital. Frankly, this place used to be so much better. The prices suck, and the selection of punk is pretty dismal. However, if you hunt enough, you can find some gems. I found a stack of CHRISTDRIVER LPs once a couple of years ago, so that was pretty rad. Oh yeah, their local releases rack is pretty good too. Not the most essential record shop, but worth a look once in a while.

Recordland: Bring a bagged lunch and reserve at least four hours. This is the mecca of used record shops. Everything you can imagine is here. Seriously, you will be in awe.

Megatunes: Sucks. Don't go here. The prices are terrible, the selection is awful (although, their selection of local artists is actually really good), and the staff can be pretty awful. Especially that creepy oily old guy who follows you around the store all the time.

Love,

Damien Inbred!

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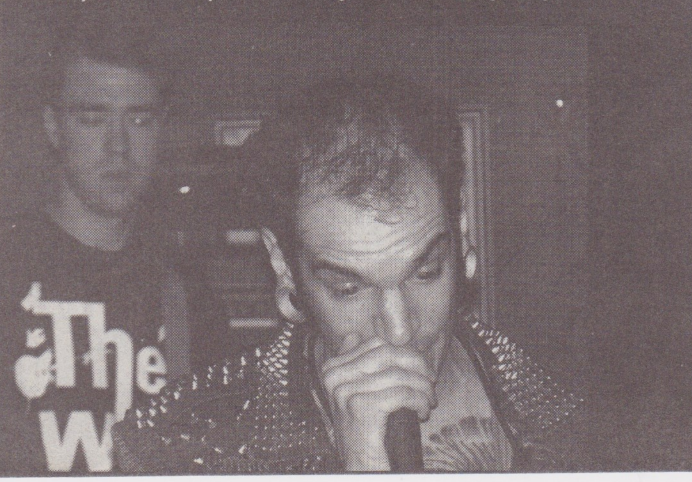
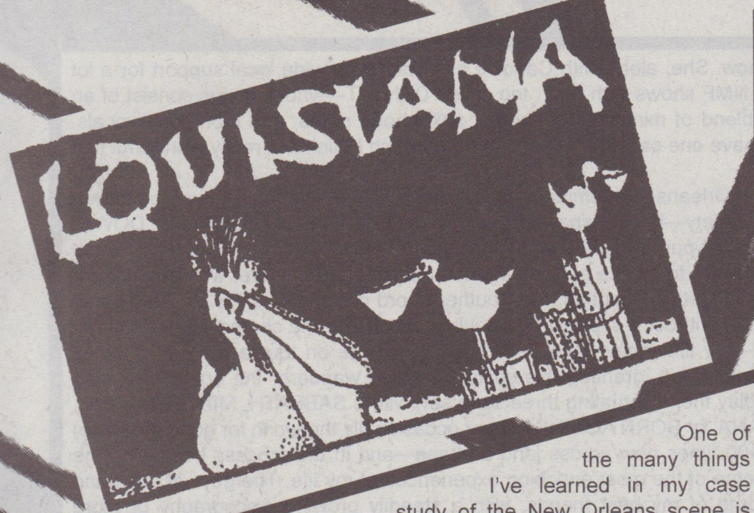
throwaways



Spastic Panthers




# "NEW ORLEANS SUCKS BECAUSE YOU SUCK"*

One of the many things I've learned in my case study of the New Orleans scene is that the respective punk rock annual migrations can tell you a lot about a particular town. In the Bay Area, for example, droves of kids turn out for the Anarchist Bookfair—which might suggest an ostensibly thriving radical community of literacy and art. In Gainesville there's The Fest—which, while overall pretty obnoxious, indicates how wild a town can become when hundreds of punks descend upon it in the name of anthemic punk rock. SXSW makes clear that Austin—while quite a beautiful city in itself, in my humble opinion—is in some ways a watered down, wannabe-L.A. corporate indie rock hotbed.

And then—there's New Orleans' yearly migration: *Mardi Gras*. Can you discern an air of bitterness in my voice? Can you perhaps sense as you read the text my spluttering, reddened face and shaking fists at the mere *mention* of its unholy name? Well, you shouldn't, because I am actually quite calm and collected—though there is, I suppose, a casual resentment underlying my sentiments. Gradually I have come to accept—nay, *appreciate*, even—the escapism of the dog-wielding, 40-oz.-grappling, spanging oogle-crusty convergence, which commences across grime-caked, potholed streets here every winter. But Mardi Gras, and the accompanying claustrophobic debauchery, I have yet to come to terms with, avoiding it like a plague for fear it might overturn my precarious well-being. Being uncompromising in my ascetic commitment to a sober lifestyle and scorning any activity remotely fun (giving me the nickname among some as "The Punk Monk"), not to mention too self-conscious to dance, I find myself sometimes feeling a little alienated in a city where I get the impression that everyone around me moved down here to, in fact, only party and indulge their hedonistic desires at Mod Dance Night. And Mardi Gras—a citywide excuse, which justifies such an attitude—magnifies this about tenfold.

THOU

But I do have fun, sometimes—when I venture out of the collective warehouse of Nowe Miasto where I live (or sometimes not even—if there's a show happening downstairs!). When I'm not being such a judgmental, self-righteous whiner, I enjoy life in this place where I happen to have sprung up from the primordial ooze of spermazoa. Besides, all this cynical rambling, I try to remind myself, proves harmful to that delicate inner *qi* energy. So, with that said, let's all of us take a moment to take a deep breath *in*...Feel the air breaking apart all that tension and all those negative thoughts...And—*release*...*Ahhhh*. Now, it's about time to discuss the positive things going on in and around this transient city I reluctantly call home.

One newer band to look out for in NOLA is SMALL BONES. I would describe them—in their brighter moments—as partially reminiscent of '90s French screamo bands like ANOMIE, although this comparison has come under fire by a certain street-wise grumpy old scenester/show promoter who virulently insists that I am an ill-informed fool and that SMALL BONES instead sound like a more danceable version of THIS MACHINE KILLS! Suffice to say, the band contains former members of Albuquerque's CITY IS THE TOWER and Athens' THIS SCARES ME, and the rawness of these previous projects shines through in spite of those genre-clashing dancy-pantsy parts.

To give you an adequate picture of what our scene is like, I'll describe the last time I saw this band play. It was a couple hours following the Saints' Superbowl win. I had been stalking about the French Quarter tailing cops on horseback in hopes of catching any rioting that might erupt at any moment. I found no overflowing of excitement/abundance of blood-alcohol levels spilling over into confrontations with the state—only lots and lots of people hollering *"WHO DAT?!"* and high-fiving me in the streets. Which is great and all—I can't really complain about people being happy, even if I *do* consider televised sports a sad, sad thing to get excited over. Neutralized anger or a beacon of hope for a much-suffering city? Another excuse to get wasted and ignore reality?! *Hmmm*... I remain undecided. Venturing down to the Dragon's Den, I'd stumbled upon Small Bones' show, put on by my friend Candice (of NECRO HIPPIES fame), in full swing. The vegetarian-restaurant-by-day, seedy-subcultural-haven-by-night was experiencing an array of technical problems. But because SMALL BONES is one of those bands who will scream in your face even when the PA isn't working, and who will play their adorable little hearts out even when the tuning gods are not on their side, this show gave me just a fleeting glimpse into a world where the punk rock show can become even *more* participatory. Toward the climax of their set, in fact, Nathan and Darin found themselves embroiled in a game of guitar chicken fight on the shoulders of hyper-excited showgoers! If only every show could be this engaging—maybe we wouldn't need the prevalence of "outside interferences" like the NFL!

Keep your eyes peeled, also, for incredible contributions to the world of DIY by way of Community Records. This label is run by two dear friends of mine, the collective duo Greg and D-Ray, who play in the much-acclaimed ska band Fatter Than Albert. Although I really enjoy watching this band play live, I may never be one to lose my shit over any ska record (though I'm indeed open to the possibility—prove me wrong!), which is, with some exception, the majority of what they release. But the *context* here is key: the ethos behind the label—of being an explicitly not-for-profit, completely accessible do-it-yourself forum offering music (much of it given away via free download), zines and artwork to, by, and for the kids—is really quite inspiring. I get the impression, with their all-ages shows and with the annual *all-day punk rock/ska block party* (which is coming up this month) that these kids are making waves and really living the adage "What we want

DENY IT

we must create." It may or may not be important to note that Greg also recently took over a coffee shop called Hey! Café, which under his co-management has since become a fair-trade, vegan-friendly show space and annex of the Iron Rail infoshop. Little by little, infrastructure is moving into the hands of the punks! For real, I would encourage you to check out what their website (communityrecords.org) has to offer, even if ska doesn't necessarily move you. Send them copies of your zine to distro. Write them lengthy correspondences about whatever tickles your fancy—they're always down to engage in conversation and would probably love to hear from you!

Speaking of the Iron Rail Book Collective, this seven-years-and-counting infoshop/library/ community space also shines beaming rays of hope into this sometimes unearthly urban wildreness. Beyond serving as a completely inclusive volunteer library and radical book store, the Iron Rail also sells obscure, niche hardcore/punk records, locally-made reusable menstrual pads, and a back-room arsenal of semi-automatic weapons for anti-capitalist agitation (just kidding, for any G-Men out there reading this!). It is home to former *Quickdummies* editor Robb Roemerhauser's glorious Aboveground Zine Library, where one can get lost for hours browsing the pages of old issues of *Heartattack* and *Scam*. The Iron Rail also screens free weekly radical films every Tuesday, and has recently begun hosting—like their Plan B counterpart—a free ladies' night every Thursday. In case you were unaware, Plan B is a volunteer-run shop next door where you can build your own bike! So if you stumble into town off the grainer with nothing but your ratty pack and mangy dog, you can walk on over to Iron Rail and get a $10 library membership (or simply volunteer for a few hours, my fellow work-free chap), and when you're done improving yourself with the literature selection, you can go over to Plan B and construct your own bike! Both are located at in the ARK space at 511 Marigny Street, bordering the French Quarter.

If the Iron Rail is the first place I direct my nomadic punk rock comrades upon arrival into town, then Domino Sound record store on Bayou Road would be the second. Matt, aka Prince Pauper, who runs this joint, is *super* into reggae, so they specialize in the ol' rasta big tunes—but they also have lots of other reasonably priced vinyl. And, much to my delight, they're stocked with cassette tapes for hella cheap! There's a reason this place made it into GQ magazine's top twenty record stores in the country. Down with the compact disc!

Osa (whom you might know from her *MRR* columns, and who asked me to write this report) has been putting on incredible lady- and queer-centered house shows under the moniker No More Fiction—shows that always seem to imbue this really uplifting and holistic, *qi*-happy atmosphere. The kind of vibe that just makes you wanna sip homebrew kombucha, relax in the vibrantly decorated living room, and enjoy the unifying forces of the No More Fiction three-dollar show! In NMF's short span of existence thus far, she's done house shows for Cristy Road and her band THE HOMEWRECKERS, shows for pop songbirds FLEABAG and LITTLE LUNGS, plus others whom I can't call to mind right now. She, along with Candice and Takiya, provide local support for a lot of the NMF shows with their trio called DENY IT—whose songs consist of an eerie blend of minor guitar chords, saxophone notes, and monotone vocals. They have one cassette release to date, which I think is a really wonderful first effort.

New Orleans' predominant underground scene, I've found, is of the stoner metal variety—having spawned such bands as EYEHATEGOD and DOWN. But this fist-pumping, head-banging facet of NOLA alternative music is about as irrelevant to my life here as Mardi Gras or the Saints are, with one not-so-inconsequential exception: the Southern Lord doom punks THOU. This band, I can say without a shadow of a doubt, has altered the course—if not outright *saved*—my life! They have generously taken me on tour a number of times (they tour *a lot*), granting this shifty awe-filled wanderer the honor of seeing them play their fluctuating three song set (with a SABBATH, MINOR THREAT, NIRVANA, or BORN AGAINST cover occasionally thrown in for good measure) over 100 times now across land and sea—and in the process bestowing me with some of the most enriching experiences of my life. The guys in this band are some of my best friends, with a steadily growing discography of more releases than I care to add up. Bryan (who's been doing all-ages shows for ten years) and Andy also book most of the awesome DIY shows I attend in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, respectively, so get in touch with them if you feel so inclined. Don't hesitate to talk them off.

Another band (whose status I am unsure of at the moment) whom I deem worth mentioning is the Bywater "food service punx" in the band CRACKBOX. OK, so this band sounds like dirty East Bay pop punk—with riffs so catchy that if not for Corrina's abrasive vocals howling obscenities you might mistake them for "mall punk." Perhaps destined to fade into the pages of history like a Whiskey-hazed memory, they were playing out a lot last year, bringing the punks together at squatted generator shows in many a bombed-out abandoned building—where, cradling the 40oz amidst a sea of black jackets, they swayed in utter abandon into the wee hours of the post-apocalyptic night. They also have one cassette tape release. The '90s live!

Along with this band, there are also a couple incredible old-timey ensembles WHY ARE WE BUILDING SUCH A BIG SHIP? and HURRAY FOR THE RIFF RAFF, who are probably some of the most musically moving bands for me in the city right now. Probably because Alynda Lee of RIFF RAFF sounds like Fiona Apple if she played banjo. These bands are talented and amazing. Played heartily on street corners or in the dregs of the Bywater's most seedy taverns on sultry nights, this is New Orleans own unique take on punk rock.

If you're more into the weirdo, freak-out noise stuff, rest assured there's some of this—in my limited grasp—happening around town as well. There's a label which puts out mostly art/noise releases by local and non-locals called Wealth & Physical Stamina, accompanied by its "house" band FISHER CAT and the wild generator shows they throw from time to time. Joey Gates (of the recently re-formed FAERIES) runs a distro/label, as well, showcasing some of his solo folk-black-metal-noise projects PEISTE and VARGR WULF. His performances have been some of the most eccentric I have ever seen—almost as strange as the guy in that noise band WOLFLINGR I saw that one time in Ireland *licking* the microphone! Both are cassette-only labels. Cult as fuck. Weird as shit.

Well, my pool of knowledge about noteworthy activity has proven just about tapped out. Realize my representations are far from objective and often pretty bias; but if I've piqued your interest at all, then just come and immerse yourself in the goings-on for a minute and decide for yourself. For a roster of upcoming subterranean activity in and around New Orleans, booking contacts, and more comprehensive documentation, gaze here: www.noladiy.org. All addresses and contact information for any above-mentioned bands/events/ places can be scoured on this site—DIY or die. Live it or leave it, dude.

Thank you for reading this. Please send me your thoughts and regale me with tales about whatever you desire. Derek Zimmer/ 223 Jane Place/ NO, LA 70119. Or write to judgeperezrevenge@yahoo.com. Stay punk, stay incendiary. xxx. *A phrase coined by the illustrious Bryan Funck

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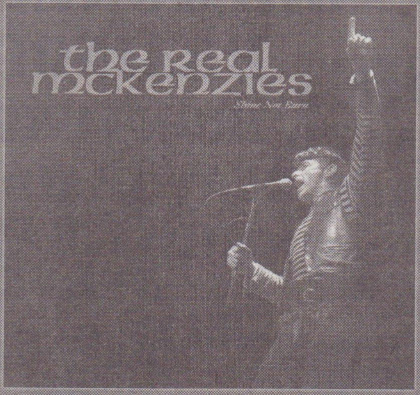


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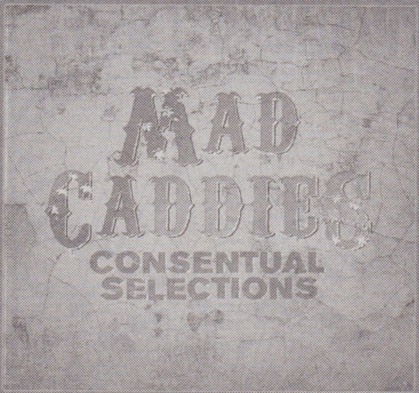


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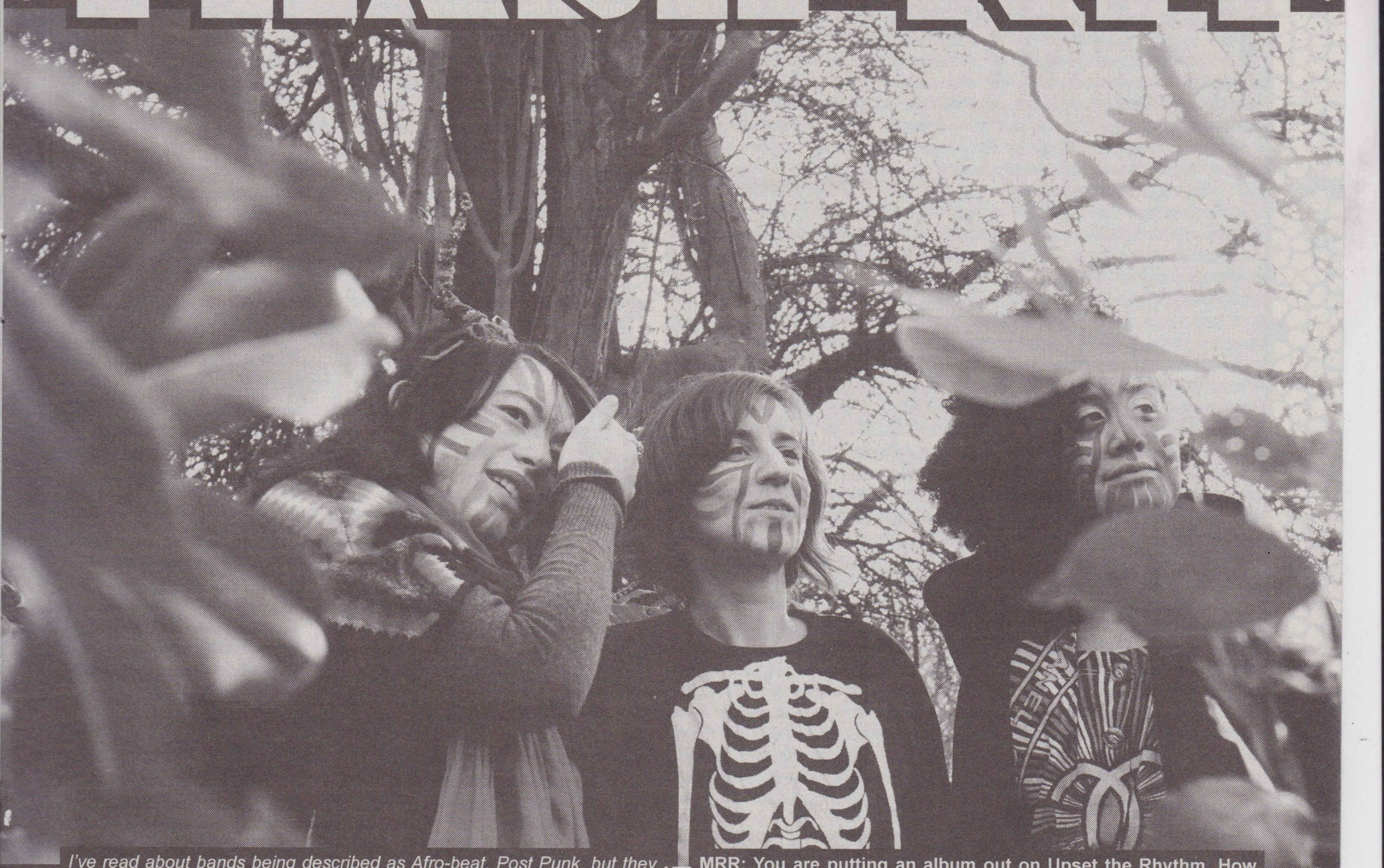
# TRASH KIT



*I've read about bands being described as Afro-beat, Post Punk, but they end up sounding like a shitty ska group or a Joy Division covers band. These two genres (Afro-beat and post punk) can lazily be used to describe Trash KIT; but I think these genres can and do represent the best aspects of the group. The first time I came across Trash KIT was when the group opened up for the band I played drums in—Black Time. Being a cool jerk, I was upstairs drinking beer and missed what was a short-lived, two-piece incarnation of the group. From then on people kept telling me how good Trash KIT was; so I went down to the next gig. There I found short songs, beautiful melodies, harmonies and rhythms—oh man, the rhythms! With the odd donk of the djembe drum thrown in and when it all got too smooth, some angsty yelps. Needless to say, I was hooked and have now seen them many times. The songs are getting more familiar in my mind and the rhythms and harmonies constantly invade my thoughts. So I managed to get hold of Rachel Aggs (guitar, violin and vocals) and Ros Murray (bass) to answer some questions and spread this great London band to whoever wants to listen. (There are two Rachels in this band in case you get confused…)*
*Interview by Mr. Stix*

**MRR: Due to the internet there is now an excess of hassling patrons online. They invite ten thousand to a Facebook event or get you to vote for their song on the Smirnoff Rock Chart. Do you agree with this aggressive marketing?**
Rachel: We've been really lucky so far with "promotion," like not needing to do it at all, so I don't know. I feel sorry for bands that are duped into signing up with totally bogus agents, etc. But it's easy for me to say because we never really needed or wanted to!
Ros: No! I'm not on Facebook so I don't understand it and don't have to worry about it, but it also means that I miss out on lots of fun things too.

**MRR: You are putting an album out on Upset the Rhythm. How did this come about, taking into consideration your lack of excessive blogging or rock chart votes? Or are you guilty of the aforementioned contemporary sins?**
Rachel: We gave our souls to Upset The Rhythm Records right after the first time they saw us play Yes Way. Yes Way was this amazing mini festival they put on at a disused car showroom in south London called Auto Italia. James from Pheromoans and Sex Is Disgusting Records saw us play our second ever show and told Chris [from Upset The Rhythm] that we should play. This was still only a month after our first gig so we didn't get much of a chance to "promote" ourselves, it's been a year since then and we're going to have an album out soon so the Upset The Rhythm promo machine is getting into gear! We're loading the biggest guns they got!!
Ros: Chris and Claire heard us on MySpace and asked us to play Yes Way, and then they asked us to do the album...

**MRR: Originality seems to be a big buzz word in the music business. However, everyone (the cool people) knows you start by borrowing from your influences. I believe yours are proudly displayed on your sleeves. But you also mix it up a bit by having a djembe drum as part of your consistent drum sound and a violin thrown in on one track replacing the guitar. How did this transformation take place? Or was it a ploy to get into the post-punk, Afro-beat demographic?**
Ros: Rachel can reply to this better, I just play bass.
Rachel: [laughter] Well I can't claim we're doing anything "new," but I hope trash kit would never sound pre-meditated or contrived because it's always felt very natural. We knew we wanted to start a band where Rachel [Rachel Horwood, their drummer] played awesome drums;

drums are what it's all based around. Rachel had only just started playing, but I knew she was going to get really good really fast and I wanted drums to be like the lead instrument in the band. The name trash kit comes from an article I read in *Shotgun Seamstress* by Osa (an amazing violin player) from New Bloods, it's a zine about punks of color and had this totally inspiring article about street drummers in DC who use trash cans as drums.

Something about the way the zine spoke about empowering people of different ethnic makeup to get them involved in making music and the queer angle of Osa's writing just made me want to explode. The way she wrote about those drums was so exciting that it got me so impatient to start making music that really engaged with how I felt about all that stuff .It got me really creative and resourceful about making music. You should read her stuff!! New Bloods is a big influence.

As for the violin song, it was just in the room one day, I wrote that song on the guitar and it sounded shit so I told Ros, "You should play this on bass and I'll do something on the violin," so including it in the band wasn't pre-meditated. I do worry that the violin song sounds a lot like Raincoats, but I think the Raincoats are pretty much the best band ever so I don't worry about it too much! We were also really excited to get our friend Verity Susman to play sax on the album and I really hope the next time we record we can get even more cool instruments in the mix. Hopefully Verity is going to start playing a few shows with us too, which will be ace! She is super talented.

**MRR: The harmonies are killer live as are some of the crazy beats and violin appearance. This could destroy any DIY punk cred—but is there a history of choir practice or music school with Trash KIT?**

Rachel: What punk cred? [laughter] Yeah, we were all pretty kick ass at music in school. When we were really young, Rachel and I bonded when we first met through stories of doing terrifying piano recitals. Rachel is way better than I ever was. Ros learned cello.

Rachel can play shit loads of instruments like guitar, sax, piano, accordion, violin... Rachel and Ros are the best people to play music with ever. Putting together songs and doing harmonies is like falling off a log with them. I guess they're both very naturally musical. I learned violin at school but really I just used to play music with my dad and his friends and I think that's where I learned to love playing with bands. We played most of the Band's back catalogue and lots of country stuff like Emmylou Harris, etc. I learned mandolin and got into bluegrass/Appalachian music as well as English folk, that's how I learned to "pick." I only started playing guitar about a year ago cause I never owned one before. I know that's probably the weirdest way to get into playing guitar, but it makes sense to me! Oh, but choir practice!? No. We just like singing! And it's usually pretty out of tune!

Ros: I can't sing so I don't join in the harmonies

**MRR: I believe it was Mike Watt of the Minutemen who said something along the lines of, "When the Minutemen created their songs they tried to make little punk rock symphonies." Judging by your song structures would it be safe to assume you create music in the same vein?**

Rachel: Cool! I like that idea a lot, but I think it would be pretty big headed to say that about our song writing. We just try hard not to be too obvious or derivative with anything we write. We would get really bored otherwise; we get bored quite easily. Every time we put a song together it's a fight against everything obvious or easy, we're trying to create something that we're still going to be excited about playing in a couple months or years time as well as trying to create something that's has an intensity and an energy to it and goes beyond slick riffs and easy grooves. I really like the Minutemen, but I've only ever really gotten into the album *Post Mersh* or something, the one with all the mega short songs on it? It's amazing because all the songs are so intense and past faced and full of ideas. A guy once said we sounded like the Minutemen, but I assume that was just cause we were nervous, we play really fast when we're nervous.

**MRR: Living in England, how much of your sound or lyrics adhere to that?**

Ros: I grew up during brit pop times. I'm a bit older than the Rachel's, so I always listened to very English music, also, many of my favorite bass players are English—Rachel Holborow of Red Monkey, Jane Munro of the Au pairs, Gina Birch of the Raincoats. But I don't believe in patriotism of course! You are always influenced by your surroundings, whether you like it or not, but we have lots of influences from lots of different places. I mean, the lyrics about the mega bus are quite English. I wonder what Americans would make of that? Maybe they think Rachel's singing about some kind of mega fancy tour bus or something.

Rachel: Hopefully we sound like where we come from because that would mean we're expressing what it's like to be alive, and to be living where we are. I can't imagine being in a band that wasn't all about that. I listen to so much music from all different parts of the world... I think it's more complicated than being able to say all English bands sound like Delta 5 or the Slits. As soon as anyone hears a female voice with an English accent it sounds "so '70s" or something. I think that's sad, I don't think you should have to put a million distortion pedals on your voice just to sound "so 2010".

**MRR: Do you intend to stay loyal to your sound or will you start referencing Cadillacs, milk shakes, jocks and hot dogs to crack that American demographic?**

Ros: No way! Although the word "trash" is an American word... but Rachel Aggs is half American anyway...

Rachel: [laughter] Cadillacs! When I hear Rivka from Wet Dog sing "Steal A Car" I still get so excited just cause it feels like it's really written about life in this town and I know I can connect with that sentiment (rain, gloom, money, red tape)... I love Times New Viking, but I was listening to this song the other day where the girl sings about getting taxis and being broke and I was thinking—if you're broke in London you don't get taxis! Also, this amazing Brilliant Colors song about "short sleeves at night"—again, nope! It's really hardly ever warm enough for that here, I don't know, I love the feel of those songs and the abstract kind of world they create in my head, but really what they sing about is a whole world away for me. It's weird sometimes I forget that, but definitely staying loyal! I'm going to start sounding nationalistic soon which is ridiculous because I'm actually half American and Rachel is half Filipino so we're not that English anyway...

**MRR: Journalists love to fill their pages writing about music scenes—for example, the Smell in LA. On the other hand, I saw a recent interview with Gary Numan and he mentioned how he prefers to shy away from any scene. Where does**

**Trash Kit fit in?**

Ros: That's a difficult question because a scene can be a very positive and a very negative thing. I think we definitely never want to be part of anything exclusive or cliquey or anything like that, but it's fun to meet lots of people and play with your friends' bands and things like that. I prefer the word community, and I like to think we belong to lots of different communities—the queer DIY stuff that's happening in Bristol around Fag Club and Drunk Granny, in London with Club Milk and people like Rosanne Barr and Corey O's…I like to think that it's a kind of political thing, rather than a "scene" which might conjure up images of trendy people patting themselves on the back.

Rachel: Well you could say we're in a scene in London, but it feels more like just friends who play together. I'm really excited about what's happening in London at the moment, it's what I always hoped to find when I moved here. A vague sense of community, a certain sound or attitude, but mainly just people in all kinds of different bands having fun and helping each other out. People in other bands in London, Bristol, Glasgow and elsewhere have been so supportive of Trash Kit; without that support, inspiration and encouragement, we would definitely have given up. Also, if it weren't for music I personally probably wouldn't have any friends at all! No joke!

**MRR: Being that there are three girls in the band, how relevant is feminism and riot grrl to the group and how much of your approach is "Girls just wanna have fun?"**

Ros: Riot grrl is totally relevant and a big influence, feminism is very important to us.

Rachel: Girls just wanna have fun!!! That is to say riot grrl and feminism means everything to us.

**MRR: I noticed you have a pre-stage ritual of tribal face paint, getting barefoot and changing your trousers. What's the deal with these pre-gig shenanigans?**

Ros: I don't know! I just prefer the stuff that washes off easily.

Rachel: I was talking to Merill from the band Tune Yards, she always wears face paint when she plays, and she was saying it was like a mask...something to make you feel empowered and fearless like war paint and very tribal. It just makes sense to us and is a definite a ritual too. Getting changed is my thing really. The others don't bother, but I need to get really psyched up before shows or I get nervous and totally bomb. I feel boring in my normal clothes and in order to play I need to feel like this super strong person, especially if I'm tired or I've been having a shitty day. Putting on shiny flame Thai boxing shorts helps loads to make me fearless and fierce!

**MRR: Last but not least, to end this on a psychoanalytical note—as only a fan of *Wayne's World* can—did you ever find Bugs Bunny attractive when he put on lipstick and dressed up as a girl bunny?**

Rachel: No. but Jessica Rabbit in that toon town movie…what is that called? Definitely hot.

Ros: Is that in *Wayne's World* Two?

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## Deep South Punk Legends from Ozone City

# REALLY RED

### An interview with U-Ron Bondage by David Ensminger

While flying home from Portland last weekend, where I lectured about the need for a greater understanding of Mexican-American gravesite traditions (no, they are not landscapes of trinkets, they are spiritual culturescapes), I flipped through a mid-1990s MRR that included multiple angry letters to the editor about Mykel Board, the magazine's perennial "straw dog". Today, I read angry letters denouncing my March interview with John Paul of Really Red, which I prefaced by explaining that punk was a wide umbrella genre with an inclusive community. If we denounce him with a purge befitting Stalin, then we should throw out our records by the Dickies, Dag Nasty, Bad Brains, and the list goes on. I support the editors. In today's saturated media environment, easily entrenched political slogans and platitudes on CNN and punk blogs act as substitutes for authentic discussion and discourse. The real danger is smug self-satisfaction.

When they offered to re-print my 2005 interview with U-Ron, I approached him about openly releasing his email to me, too, in which he explains his reaction to the article (the email can be found in the letters section of this issue). I do not seek to fissure the band's relationship with each other. I seek to explore the multiple perspectives (even multiple truths) that occur throughout the history of most punk bands. As a reader of MRR since the winter of 1984, I feel more dedicated than ever to its efforts because it is willing to engage, not pretend, and to incite, not recite. Flex your head.

Layout by Chris Minicucci

**MRR: From Lightnin' Hopkins to Roy Head to Townes Van Zandt to Steve Earle to ZZ Top (OK, Dallas should get some credit, too...), and even Kenny Rogers, Houston has been the home to a myriad of artists. When you started listening to music in Houston, were you at all aware of the city's rich musical history? What was local music like when you were growing up? For instance, Steve Earle sings of Telephone Road and the gritty honky tonks...**

U-Ron: First off, it is very flattering to be asked to do this interview 25 years after the release of Really Red's first LP. It's even odder that Empty Records wanted to re-release it 25 years after the fact. I'm pretty stunned. Really Red never thought that we would be remembered three years after we broke up. All that said, I have no idea who in the hell would want to read this, but at the risk of being totally boring I'll try and give you the best answers I can. I have to point out that this will be my perspective and recollections. In no way should any of this be taken as reflecting the opinions of Bob, John Paul, or Kelly, the other three former members of Really Red. They might remember things in a whole other way. Maybe no one will care about or remember these people and places, but they were all involved in Houston's formative punk scene in one way or another, and they do deserve to be mentioned. This is about a scene that is long gone, but it took a lot of brave and unique people to make it happen. They deserve credit. I appreciate the chance to give it to them and to tell our story.

When I moved from Canada to Houston in the 9th grade, I knew very little at the time about any Texas music. By time I was in the 10th grade, I started going to see live music. One of the greatest bands that I ever saw was The 13th Floor Elevators. They were amazing. A bunch of working class acid heads from East Texas who shirked any trappings of being wannabe rock stars. They were drenched with acid mystique, and when they weren't too high to play, they were like a damn hurricane. They were playing their own brand of psychedelic punk. They were one of the greatest and strangest bands that I've ever seen. I still love them and still listen to their recordings.

I met Kelly Younger around that time. We formed a band with Andy Feehan, and some other guys, called The Lords. We played these community center teen dances. The Lords, only played covers. Hit singles and the like. At least we did album cuts of the Velvet Underground, Rolling Stones, Animals, Yardbirds and Love. We thought we were pretty radical because we refused to wear uniforms, and most other groups did. Most bands only played known radio hits and we played album tracks. You have to remember this was before FM radio started playing album cuts. With few exceptions, radio only would play the selected single. There were other interesting bands doing some originals, but not too many at that time. Everything was so restricted and stifled. I remember at one gig some older asshole stepped up and sucker punched Andy because he had yelled, "Fuck it!" in frustration about something. It was ridiculous.

Later, Andy Feehan and I started hanging out in the psychedelic clubs. You could go there underage because they were not serving alcohol, just lots of weed being smoked. We saw the 13th Floor Elevators playing at 2 and 3 AM. We saw bands like Bubble Puppy, the immensely underrated Children from San Antonio, The Chessmen of Dallas (the Vaughan brothers), and we got to see Sam "Lightnin" Hopkins a bunch of times. It was an excellent introduction to live noncommercial music.

The Lords broke up before I finally got kicked out of high school for "subversive political activity" and I left my parents' home. My "subversive political activity," by the way, was nothing more than being very vocally against the damn Vietnam War. I was on a Houston Independent School district blacklist. They were out to get kids like me, and they finally did. It happened to a lot of kids. High school was an Orwellian nightmare. It was really an eye opener. Once you see the lies exposed, it is impossible for anyone to stuff the genie back in the bottle. After high school I moved into a big house with Kelly and a crew of crazies, and it was a time of lots of live music, experimenting with acid, weed, and beer, nothing too different from the rest of the world. Kelly and I met up with John Paul around this time.

After a few years of working shit jobs and staying stoned Kelly, John Paul, and I ended up living in a series of old houses in the Montrose district. Kelly got hit by a car, and as a result of the insurance settlement he bought these huge Orange amps and some guitars and stuff, and we used to get fucked up and try and make original music. We sucked, but we had a lot of fun. We would go out to the Attics Dam area and pick shopping bags full of Texas psychedelic mushrooms. It was wild. You would wait until after a good rain and go out to the cow pastures there and pick all you wanted. People would have these mushroom parties. Crazy crazy times.

By this time the psych clubs were long gone and the local live music scene began to really suck. There were touring bands all of the time, but the local rock and roll music scene had dried up due to lack of club and radio support. Everyone who was on tour came through Houston in those days. I mean it. But a lot of the Houston clubs had a preference for cover bands only if you were local. It was fucked up. Austin had the Cosmic Cowboy thing and Houston had cover bands, kicker bars and pre-disco DJ clubs. It was a bleak time for local rock music.

**Apart from music, tell me about Houston during the late 1970s, which you've called a turbulent time, yet also the time of a female mayor, Kathy Whitmire, who later formed the Civilian Review Committee to investigate police abuse, because many people may not know that it was basically a boomtown, an oil town, that had evolved very quickly, then almost collapsed. "When oil reached $40 a barrel in 1981, Houston was awash in money as scores of happy Texans got rich quick; four years later, the price of oil plummeted to single digits and Houstonians got poor even faster," says Lonely Planet. Is this partly what you meant by turbulent?**

Houston in the early '70s, for me, was really a bore. As I said, the local music scene turned to shit and there was not a lot to do. Kelly, JP, and I would go to these boring disco "fake nightclubs" and do a kind of Clockwork Orange thing. Basically it was getting loaded, trying to pick up women, and just being rude and obnoxious. As a result of acting like jerks we were thrown out of a bunch of these places. We didn't fit in. We didn't want to fit in.

Sometimes we'd get a drummer for a while and try and create some music, but there was no place to play so it was a lot of directionless jamming at our house. The frustration and boredom were typical of the times, I guess, and it probably was happening all over. The police were always a total pain in the ass. I got arrested so many times for rinky-dink stupid things. You always had to be looking over your shoulder for the cops. It was worse for blacks, Latinos and gays. The HPD was being investigated by the federal government for all kinds of questionable uses of lethal force. They were known as the "killer cops" as a result. Houston also had the distinction of being the "murder capital of the nation" at this time.

The city was a big corporate shopping mall on the surface, but underneath it all, the frustration and boredom were brewing creativity. A repressive, fucked up, mean city. We stayed in the inner city areas like the Montrose and the Heights for the most part because if you ventured out to suburbia it was a real nightmare of strip malls, Cadillac cowboys wearing their spurs just for show, disco clubs, sports bars, mindless suburban rednecks, and the vulgarly rich. It was disgusting. The politics were smug. There was no kind of "street scene" that I can remember, except people driving around the strip shopping malls in their cars. The cops didn't want to see you "on the street." You were supposed to be off the street and spending your money in consumer frenzy. If you

weren't doing that then you were suspect. "Hey, why aren't you inside there playing foosball? Where's your car?" The only thing you could hope for was a cool touring band coming through.

**I assume punk roots were centered in the Montrose area, which some called a hippie ghetto in the '70s, where a lot of psychedelia was happening, and by 1980, had become a very openly gay district, with bars up and down the main drag, Westheimer. But, then again, from what I understand, the best place to see music was Liberty Hall, over in the Third Ward. Where do you see punk as beginning?**

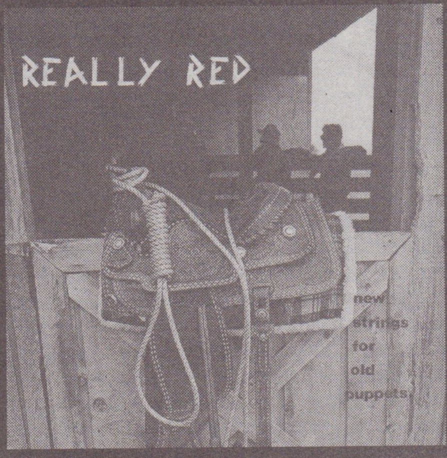
After the demise of the 13th Floor Elevators there was very little that I can recall that had even the remotest resemblance to what would become punk. I'm talking about local bands, Texas bands. The Cosmic Cowboy thing was in full swing in Austin and the disco scene was everywhere. Montrose was a fairly low rent district, and it was full of the remainder of the hippie scene, the artists, the gays, the characters and lower income people. You're right about Liberty Hall. It was a place that tried to bring all kinds of music to town. It was the club that took chances, and it was also an unpretentious, real Texas music hall. Cold longneck beer, a wooden floor, a fairly big stage, and a friendly crew of employees made it great. They booked all kinds of stuff and there were no racist limitations. They booked the little-known Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band

there for a whole week. I saw the New York Dolls there two nights in a row, and later on that was where the Ramones played their first Houston shows, also for two nights.

Before that by a few years Kelly, JP, some other guys and I had finally formed a cover band, called China. To get any gigs you had to do covers. It was a horrible mishmash of stuff, and China fell apart. Who wanted to just play cover songs at Houlihan's Hamburgers, even if they were good cover songs?

Then a year or so later Kelly, JP, and I linked up with a guy named Curtis Riker. We learned Curtis' songs with

the intent of doing original music and some covers, but it wasn't any fun. Everyone but Curtis was secretly very dissatisfied. We played our first gig as Really Red at Ray's Icehouse in Pasadena, outside of Houston. Pasadena, at the time, was known for two things. One was the drive-in porn theater, and the other was the Ku Klux Klan. We played for "all the chili we could eat." I think we bombed at Ray's Icehouse in Pasadena. The four patrons thought we stunk. The chili was good, though. The first thing that I was aware of on the local Houston scene that had anything to do with punk rock was the advent of the band Legionnaire's Disease. The Sex Pistols had come to Texas and gone, and one Jerry Anomie, fresh out of prison, had somehow ended up at their show in San Antonio. Well, he was inspired. He came back to Houston and put together, what I remember as, Houston's first punk band. They were The Legionnaire's Disease Band. They were chaos! Superb chaos. Just exactly what Houston needed. Musically they were nothing very original. Their original stuff was either a version of the Sex Pistols or a version The Stooges. But what they lacked in musical originality, they more than




made up with sheer guts and spectacle. They would literally con their way into playing some sleepy hippie bar or unsuspecting club with the intent of causing a riot. They would walk out in front of an unsuspecting crowd of beer guzzling hippies and completely freak everyone out. There was blond and stacked Gwen Duke playing bass in her underwear. There was Norman dressed in a mock Gestapo uniform and holding a completely unplugged guitar. Their real guitarist was way loud and could actually play. By the second song, Jerry would have dropped his pants and begun playing air guitar using his dick for a guitar. He would be totally naked by the third song. He was this skinny little guy with his back covered in a jailhouse tattoo. He would yell things like "It's deprogramming time," and "Wake up!" He would run into the audience and turn over tables and pour people's beer on them. They were part threat and part farce. It was dangerous, exciting, and hilarious. They were also amazing at self-promotion too. Jerry could talk bar owners into booking them after

they had been banned from any place they had previously played. They were the first Houston punk band that played anywhere in public, as far as I'm concerned. Really Red learned a lot from their attitude and their approach to self-promotion.

Kelly, JP, Bob, and I started seeing Jerry and Legionnaire's Disease gigs. It wasn't until we saw Jerry and the Disease having a blast doing punk rock, and actually doing it in Houston, that we realized that we could also get away with playing what we really wanted to be playing. We were so ready to create some chaos of our own. We told Curtis that this was where we were going and he bailed. This was about 1978, I guess. We started making our own songs and practicing our asses off. We got some gigs in shithole bars and didn't do too bad. We gigged with the Disease several times and got along with them just fine. That is when we started to get serious. From then on it was every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday nights for practice, booze, and sometimes arguments. We did that religiously the whole time we were together.

**MRR: This is how you've phrased your experience of that time; "The bands, audiences, publishers, artists,and DJs were cutting their way through uncharted areas, breaking lots of rules as they invented a new counter-culture. Being a small part of the lives of the wild, inspiring, and often crazy people that we met along the way was well worth the time, money, and energy spent—not to mention the often frustrating experiences with rip-off promoters, cheap motels, lousy sound systems, unresponsive DJs, and abusive police." Were all these things just the nature of the beast in terms of touring the US in the early punk days, or were they extremely magnified in Texas?**

Well, I don't think that I can improve on that quote, but I can sure expand on it. Back when there were no "punk" clubs or bars to play in at all, and I don't just mean in Houston or Texas, what you did was start from scratch creating your own scene. I mean, you had to con down and out bars that had no clientele into letting you put on "a rock show". Then you would spend the week plastering up posters and telling everyone you knew about it. The gig would usually be on a shitty night and when you played, the bar would have a shit fit and kick you out or at least say "Never again!" Then you would go to the next shithole and try it again. This is how it was all over the country. This is what DOA did in Vancouver, the Avengers and Dead Kennedys in Frisco, Black Flag, Circle Jerks, and X in LA, Big Boys and The Dicks in Austin, Meat Puppets and Hüsker Dü, and on all across the country. If you ran out of bars you would rent VFW halls, or any warehouse space that could be used for a one-off gig. You would play anywhere that would let you. We were thrown out of and banned from lots of places, as were other bands all across the country. It wasn't like it is now, where a punk band has a ready made and waiting club in every town. Oh no. You didn't have punk booking agencies to find places for you to play. You had to talk people into letting you play a show. You had to twist arms and bullshit people. You had to do it yourself.

It went on like this for a year or so until some place started warming up to the idea of letting these crappy bands have regular shows. These "crappy" bands were drawing a whole new crowd of people. Then, those places became the local punk clubs. A scene started growing around them. Then a band could try and play in some other town. Bands started contacting each other asking where there was to play. The fanzines exploded and every town had some little rag with interesting scene reports and reviews. Dozens upon dozens of little Xeroxed zines full of rants and reviews. When you toured you slept on people's floors, in fleabag motels, and in your van. You met all kinds of interesting characters as a result, and you ended up playing some strange "venues."

It took a long time, a lot of diligence, and a lot of work to create the punk scene. You had to not only work on your music, but you had to literally create places to play before anyone could even go to a gig to hear you. You had to design your gig flyers and go out and put up them up. You often had to rent a sound system as the little joints didn't have any. You had to do all the work hauling equipment and setting it up because maybe you would only have one friend/roadie to help. You wouldn't make any money because you would keep the cover charge down to nothing. We had plenty of shows where two or three bands split a $2 or $3 cover charge. We did gigs for $1 cover charges! It wasn't about making money. Really Red's idea about the money was that we weren't out to make big bucks, but if someone was going to make money off of us, then we would be getting our share. In the early days, and up through 1983, most bands were pretty cool about playing for low covers. Of course, this invited certain greedy club owners or asshole promoters to try and take advantage of these bands. They did, too. Rip-offs were common and brazen. Sometimes it got ugly just trying to get what you were promised. Real ugly.

There were few rules, and people were defining what their punk scene was. People dressed in any old thing that they thought was punk. It was also a constant battle. Club owners, promoters and cops didn't know what the hell was going on. Audiences were just as confused at times. For a while some people thought that spitting on the bands was what they were expected

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to do. Later on, throwing bottles and stuff was in fashion. Breaking up shit, like chairs and stuff, would happen in this period. It was the explosion of turbulence that I referred to. It was the audience and bands versus the bar, their staff and cops. It was frustration and boredom with corporate America and the suburban nightmare exploding in desperation. It was dangerous and chaotic. There was that big Latino guy shooting off his gun into the ceiling at The Island before Phil Hix took over the management from him. There were sadistic bouncers beating the crap out of people because they were panicked and didn't know what was going on. It was exciting all right, but at times it was scary because it was new territory for everyone. Where it was going was anybody's guess. It started to gel into a real scene once the majority of people realized that if we destroyed the clubs then we would have nowhere to go. If club owners allowed bouncers to beat up people, then no one would show up anymore. Clubs/bars, bands and audiences started working together to make OUR scene. The Island was the first openly punk club in Houston. You went out three or four nights a week to see fledgling bands, to "support the local scene," and to keep it all alive. I must have been at one show or another almost every single weekend for about seven years. It was intense, as we were all getting a bit of control and autonomy over our own lives, and that was exciting. People were being creative in a wild, satisfying way. We were collectively doing what we wanted, how we wanted to do it, and doing it in spite of the lack of attention paid by the media and the dominant corporate culture, and in spite of the attention paid by the police. We didn't need either. We were alive! I wouldn't have missed it for the world. It wasn't all violence and scary, either. Sometimes it was downright hilarious. It didn't matter if you screwed up or made an ass of yourself because nobody but the local scene would take notice anyway, and the bands and the audience were often hard to differentiate. In a way, the audience had taken over the stage. It was freedom.

**Christian Arnheiter, who actually saw the Sex Pistols play in San Antonio, is often claimed to be one of Houston's original punk purveyors, since his band the Hates formed around 1978. He had a radio show on KTRU and used to buy tons of records from the import bin at Cactus. But what characters do you remember who might have formed the genesis of the music scene as bands ike the Ramones, The Nerves, and the Sex Pistols played Texas in 1978?**

Yeah, Christian was around in the early days. I never heard of him or his band until after Legionnaire's Disease happened. The way I remember it, the original Hates played some gigs in few places and then broke up. Before they broke up they recorded a bunch of songs. After they broke up, Christian pressed the songs and then released them over the next few years. It was a while until he got another Hates together and this kept the name out there. He would show up at a lot of gigs, not especially Really Red gigs. We weren't very close. The next versions of the Hates played rarely. Once every eight months or so, at least that is how I remember it. To my knowledge there were no Hates tours or anything, just the occasional Houston gig. But then he would write his own show reviews, "scene reports," for Maximum Rocknroll. I didn't know anyone that was into the Hates. Maybe I just missed the Hates scene. I don't know. He did have the first punk radio show in Houston. It was really short lived though. It was at KPFT, and I think they canned him after a few shows for swearing or some stupid reason. I don't know what happened there. That was early on, though. He was there at the start of the Houston punk scene. That much I know.

Other notable characters who contributed to the original Houston scene? Wow, let's see... I gotta say Phil Hix, the manager of the Island. Maybe it was spelled Hicks? Sorry Phil. Without Phil there would not have been anywhere to play. The Island was Houston's first real punk rock club. It was crazy. I'll never forget it. At first it was pretty violent because of a couple of psycho sadist bouncers, but after Phil got rid of them it was a lot of fun. Richard Tomcala started booking for Phil and the Island really took off. Richard kept his long hippie hair throughout that whole time, and that took some guts. Certain idiots would beat you up if your hair wasn't just right. He was constantly getting shit for it. But he was as much of the punk scene, when all is said and done, as anyone. So much for uniforms, eh?

I should be careful because I don't want to slight anyone. It was a long time back. Let's see, the Plastic Idols were early on, but short lived. They had an early Devo-type sound. Gary Yokie and the Ruse were in there, and they were great scene supporters. The strange MC5 meets Hawkwind outfit known as AK-47 would pop up. Starting at the beginning there was Henry Wilddog. He was this great character. He was an ex-Yippie who promoted some real early shows and had a fanzine. Later on he had a band called The Vast Majority. There

female band, The Mydolls, who John Peel interviewed live on the BBC. There were the new wave popsters The Judys. JR Delgato came along later with Doomsday Massacre and later he had The Party Owls. The Killerwatz were early on, and around for quite a while, and the Recipients. There were the high school kids with bands like The Delinquents and The Parents. And I cannot forget Culturcide!!! Ho ho! They really freaked out a lot of people. You just couldn't put them into any category, thankfully.

There were scenesters like Matt Fatt, a guy who lived behind the bar at the Island and sometimes ran the door. He literally lived there in that heat and squalor. The Island sold liquor as well as beer and wine, but I don't think they ever carded anyone, as the place was always full of underage kids as well as the legal-aged adults. There must have been some kind of payola going on because the cops never busted the place for minors, but they would just come by and randomly arrest 10 or 12 people, or just get on stage and say "Go home, the show is over." They closed a Big Boys and Dicks show, I think, on a Friday night for no particular reason. We were playing the next night, so we found some

oldcop uniform shirts at the Goodwill and wore them that night when we played. We painted big bull's-eye targets on the back of them, though.

**Supposedly, according to Scott Telles from the band Vast Majority, the early appearances of Really Red and Legionnaire's Disease were at Yippie events, sponsored by the likes of the Direct Action Committee, a University of Houston organization. Is that what helped shape the band's politics, or were these people just convenient in terms of getting gigs and publicity?**

Ah yes, the Yippie events were put on by Henry Wilddog who, like I said, was an early supporter of the Houston punk scene. I can say that even though the Yippie scene was fading and the punk scene was emerging, there was a certain anarchist anti-capitalist area where they overlapped ideology-wise. He saw that and so did we. I can't speak for Jerry and the Disease, but I remember both bands being in full support of what the Yippies were on about at the time. While Legionnaire's Disease's politics were sheer chaos and shock, Really Red's politics were somewhat more focused and defined.

Really Red members were never in total agreement all the time on everything, but we had general areas where we were on the same page. However, as I wrote my own lyrics and made most of the flyers, I guess that allowed my politics to dominate the band. We never were out to become rock stars.

We had day jobs. We were not making any money to speak of. With expenses of recording, equipment, a van, and traveling we called it "paying to play," as we always were in the hole and had to kick in money from our day jobs. We loved what we were doing, and what we were doing was trying to make high-energy rock that might be a small catalyst to inspire people to start thinking and to start standing up for social justice and political change. We tried to practice and not just preach. We did benefit gigs all the time, for everything from the John Brown Anti-Klan Organization, to KPFT radio, to raising money for an operation for someone's dog. It was part of the gig. Social conscience. Civic duty, if you will. My politics were way left. We sometimes would have major battles within the band about it. But there always was enough common ground to find an agreement. We made some really dumb "career moves" as a result of my becoming dogmatic about ideological things. Crass was a big influence on us at this time. I remember two really dumb things that we probably should have done differently. We had few rules but one of them was no photos of the band in our press releases. The thinking behind this was that photos were too "rock star" and promoted "personality cult" type stuff. As a result, the press, punk or otherwise, rarely had a picture of us to print. Obviously, this didn't help promote Really Red. Most of the photos that we have of the band were taken by someone who had nothing to do with the band and who gave us copies. Of course, all of our friends in other bands that we respected very much were turning out glossy 8 x 10s for the press. Duh.

Another stupid move was at the height of our popularity. The Clash were coming to Texas on their Combat Rock tour. Butler Hancock was promoting the Texas part of their tour. He said that The Clash wanted us to open for them in Houston and Austin, and if all went well, maybe Dallas and wherever else they were playing in Texas. It was going to be those big arena type venues. We were for it except we had some reservations about playing those types of huge venues. Then Butler showed me the contract rider from The Clash. They were demanding all this rock star crap for backstage. It was amazing, and very disappointing to see. They were demanding china plates, silverware, tablecloths, cognac, and massive amounts of special catered food and drink, and who knows what. I thought, "What a bunch of petty bourgeois crap! What a load of rock star posers!" These aren't punks anymore, sez I. So, we told Butler to tell the mighty Clash to piss off. So? They contacted these New Orleans guys, The Red Rockers, and they flew in and did the whole tour of Texas with The Clash. However, Butler did let us into the show and backstage where we did eat and drink our fill of The Clash's fancy food and booze. There was a line of people getting Joe Strummer's autograph, and so I walked up to him like the drunken jackass that I was and said to him, as he was signing an Ellen Foley album that he and Mick had produced, "What's it all about Joe? Autographs?" He told me that, if he didn't do it then people would get pissed off. I said, "We don't want to be in a punk band and piss anyone off now, do we?" I was a bit of a jerk to old Joe, I suppose. I really liked him. May he rest in peace. So, no one saw Really Red opening for The Clash and we proved what? I don't know. Anonymity?

**You owned Real Records, and supposedly another good store was Evolution Records on Bellaire. How did you end up owning and operating your own store? And, did you see that as part and parcel of, say, the IWW's (Industrial Worker's World) making a new world within the old, meaning changing the way people did business, or was it simply a job? The same idea could apply to your label, CIA, which, in addition to the Really Red records, put out vinyl by the Mydolls, Culturcide, Introverts, and Doomsday Massacre.**

I started Real Records with a $2,500 loan from a friend, and a partner who kicked in the same. Of course, I couldn't have done it without the total support of my ex-wife. The object was to eke out a living, promote good alternative music, and sow the seeds of discontent. Not too original of an idea really. I had very high ideals about what could happen. My partner had other ideas and decided to become a heroin addict. He looted me blind. I got rid of him. I floundered for a few years trying

to dig myself out of debt. I came up with the idiotic idea to deal cocaine to help get myself out of debt. How brilliant! I became strung out on coke. I later went bankrupt and was stuck with a drug habit. It took a few years to kick that. A disaster. I ended up working for my competition, The Sound Exchange. They were gracious enough to hire me back, as I had been the original store manager before I opened my place.

The CIA Records label was never mine. It wasn't really anybody's. Really Red was paying for everything ourselves. We were the label, as far as who paid for our recordings and pressings, etc. CIA Records was an address, a phone number, and Bob's closet full of records. So when our friends were going to put out a record, we would invite them to use the CIA name. They would pay for their own recordings, pressing, artwork, and freight, and we would add them to the "CIA roster," give them contacts and help them distribute their records. If their records sold, they got all the money. Same for Really Red, and we never broke even. The idea was that it would be more likely for distributors and radio stations to pick up something from some label that they already knew than from yet another unknown band and label. It worked fairly well. It was a kind of distribution co-op more than it was a real label.

**I have pictures of you standing outside the Island with Klaus Flouride of the Dead Kennedys, but how did you end up on the Let Them Eat Jellybeans comp? It seems as if Jello might have chosen The Dicks, who were later on Alternative Tentacles, but Really Red alone represented the whole South, and thus exposed you to a worldwide interest in emerging hardcore music.**

That came about because on our first tour to the West Coast we played some shows in San Francisco. Biafra saw us at the Mabuhay Gardens. He liked us. A month or so after the tour he called me up and asked if we would be on the compilation. We sent him the tapes of the Teaching You The Fear album that we were working on and he picked the song "Prostitution." I would have picked something else, but we wanted to be on the record so "Prostitution" it was. The picture of Klaus and me was taken in front of the Island. We were fortunate enough to share the bill with the Dead Kennedys on a couple of occasions. Really Red got to share bills with a lot of great bands besides the Dead Kennedys. We toured some west coast dates with the truly awesome DOA around 1981. I've seen them so many times, and they never have done a bum gig! We toured the west coast and Texas with DOA and also with Articles of Faith and we played shows with MDC, The Effigies, Negative Approach, The Stranglers, 999, The Dicks, John Cale, Circle Jerks, SPK, The Lewd, Mark Arm's first outfit Mr. Epp and the Calculations, Bad Brains, Big Boys, the Fastbacks, Die Kruezen, and many, many others. But my favorites were always DOA and The Dicks.

**The song on the comp that really announced the band was "Prostitution," a personal fave of mine. Did this song directly relate to your feelings, later expressed in the promo for the new re-issue, that "Really Red never had any dream of becoming stars, nor was our intention ever to 'get signed' by a major label, a goal that seems all too common with so-called alternative bands of the '90s. Our aim was to be somewhat of a catalyst, however small, for thought, outrage, fun, action, and ultimately change and to have a great time provoking it." Are you suggesting that many indie bands prostitute their ideas, images, and music, still today, for the sake of contracts and an illusionary audience? Therefore, no lessons have been learned?**

I'm flattered you like it. I don't dislike it. I just would have picked something else for the compilation at the time, but for some reason Biafra wanted that tune. I guess that we all are prostitutes to one degree or another. I guess it comes down to what one's motivation really is. I wrote those lyrics about those people who the corporate rock industry had made into untouchable gods, who at the same time were churning out meaningless dribble that was supposed to be some heavy thing, because it was they who were putting it out. All form and no content. All personality cult and no real substance. Phony hollow rebels, driving around in limousines, making money for huge corporations, but still wearing their blue jeans and "street clothes" for sales credibility. Later on, you'd see mohawks and leather jackets doing the same in the '90s.

Yeah, there's also a lot of it around today as Clear Channel buys up the airwaves and spews out slick manufactured, sexy, alternative rebelliousness that is censured from singing any anti-war lyrics. Don't kid yourself; the likes of bad boy rebels such as Eminem and Marilyn Manson are on a leash. They can go just so far. The very term "alternative" has been prostituted. I mean, how could Nirvana have been any kind of "alternative" anything? They were the number one record on a huge corporate label with videos shown on corporate TV as they played huge venues, and they were still referred to as "alternative" rock? They are still called "alternative rock." What were they an alternative to? I'll tell you what-lesser-known independent groups who were as good or better-that's what. Is alternative music a hairstyle, or maybe a leather jacket? Is it just playing fast, using swear words, dressing in drag or shaking your hair around? I don't think so. If you want to be a Nirvana, or Eminem, or whatever, that is all fine, but for cryin' out loud, at least have the guts to call it what it is- mainstream corporate rock selling a rebellious youth culture image for a big corporate profit. Some of it can be entertaining to listen to, of course, but the only thing it is an "alternative" to is independent non-corporate music. To me, the term "alternative music" was coined for music made by artists that were an alternative to corporate rock. The term is meaningless now, and it is no accident.

**It seems that unlike Austin, and even Dallas, the Houston punk community is relatively unknown. Yes, bands like the Mydolls, whose member Linda you were once married to, were on the Cottage Cheese... compilation, and AK-47 had some notoriety, but bands like the Egos, Urban Guerillas, Plastic Idols, Recipients, Spys, and the Tix are mostly unknown. Has there always been an historical bias towards the other cities, or was Houston truly second-rate?**

Maybe Houston's scene was just really underground? (Laughter) Maybe other cities get more support from people with money? Maybe Houston lacks the ability to promote itself? I am not too sure what the problem is. I know that there always have been talented smart people kicking around there. I know that the general mass media across the country seems to ignore the Houston music scene and focuses on Austin. That's why people move to Austin, to "be discovered". I was never impressed with anything that came out of Dallas except The Hugh Beaumont Experience. They were wonderful. The Mydolls accomplished everything that they accomplished on their own merit. Yes, my ex-wife was in that band, but aside from a few gigs that we did together, they were independent from Really Red and didn't "ride on our coat tails" in the least. They were out there doing their own thing.

**John Paul writes on the punk rock archive site breakmyface.com, "Really Red was a band committed to freedom of expression, political statement, some misguided opinions, and a lot of volatility.... Ronnie didn't want to "sing" anybody else's lyrics, so we went along with that as long as we agreed on the content. After all, Ronnie sang, and we played... One thing is for sure: Really Red had integrity and a lot of faults and**

**through that friction came fire." John Paul seems to be suggesting that the other members perhaps didn't share your insight or beliefs. Was there volatility and confrontation when it came to subject matter?**

Like I was saying, sometimes there were disagreements. Sometimes there were shouting matches. A lot of times it was about the band's direction or political ideology. Sometimes it was about sorting out current events. Sometimes it was about stupid stuff, like who didn't help pack up the gear. Hell, being in a band is like being married to three other people all at the same time. Three times the ups and downs. Three times the haggling and compromising. There always was enough common ground between us to eventually get to an agreement.

**John Paul went on to say, like the Minutemen, "Really Red as a group worked hard. We practiced every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday afternoon without fail. If you were hungover, pissed off, not feeling good or whatever, there were no good excuses. You showed up, and you played. We were a band that jammed for hours on end. We played stuff we didn't even know what it was. We just jammed. Through the jam we came up with interesting riffs," yet you've written, "But I do feel that we turned out some good music, for our limited abilities and the somewhat restrictive musical genre we chose." It sounds like you were trying to push the envelope, and did, especially when compared to bands like DRI and even The Dicks, yet today you still feel that the efforts were a bit slight and stunted?**

Naw. JP was totally right on. There's no disagreement there. We worked really hard and we partied really hard, and usually at the same time. I'm very proud of our stuff and I am extremely proud to have been in a group with these three guys. We had our differences and we don't even talk these days, but listen to those bastards. Killer bass all over the place, frantic freaked out guitar shit that steps way outside the clichés of punk, and full tilt drum assaults that pushed everything over the top! Like I said, we tried to make our punk rock our punk rock. Sometimes we failed and a lot of times we succeeded. We didn't want to be a cliché or a stereotype. What I meant by, "our limited abilities and the somewhat restrictive musical genre that we chose," is simply this: No one will mistake Really Red for say, The Mahavishnu Orchestra, and punk rock isn't a technically complicated genre when it comes to music in general, and I wasn't going to give the likes of Tom Jones or Pavarotti any competition on vocals but…who gives a fuck, eh? My only regret is that I wished we had gotten down better produced recordings. But then would that have been in keeping with the spirit of DIY punk rock? Raw is good.

**Many people are aware of the Bad Brains incident in Austin when they stayed with the Big Boys, but let's not go there. What were your impressions of the Bad Brains since you did have a chance to play with them? How would you compare their music and politics to bands like DOA, The Lewd, Articles of Faith, and many others you shared the stage with?**

I thought the band was ferociously good. Technically amazing too. It was obvious to me that they could have been playing other types of more complicated music prior to being Bad Brains. I didn't like HR much at all on stage or off. He was into that weird Rastafarian religion and he seemed a little fanatical about it. He was very cold and aloof backstage. I don't think he liked "reds." Later, I heard about the incident in Austin at Tim's, and it didn't come as a big surprise. I don't know enough about the Bad Brains' politics to comment.

I think the politics of Joey and DOA were and are brilliant and a total inspiration. I have great admiration for that Shithead guy! He's never sold out. Check out his book "I, Shithead. A Life in Punk." I just saw him a month ago on the 25th anniversary tour or something. They were like a runaway freight train still. Amazing. Articles of Faith were terrific guys and a terrific band. Very progressive politically, too. Very intellectual people. Very well read. I just learned that Vic Bondi also lives in the Seattle area now, as I do. The Lewd's politics seemed to be closer to Legionnaire's Disease's pure hedonism. It would be impossible to give you my take on the politics of all the groups we played with, and even if I could, who gives a shit what I think about someone else's politics?

All I know is that people had better wake up and get rid of this cabal of corporate fascists who have taken over the country. They are destroying it more each day. This is not even Republican's business as usual. We've had a rigged election and a bloodless coup. We've had a terrorist attack that somehow the national defense allowed to happen. There were a lot of things that happened on 9/11 that are not being explained and that stink. We've had the invasion of Afghanistan, but Pakistan and the Saudis still have US support. We've had 100% total lies to justify the invasion of Iraq and a coup in Haiti. The combined death toll of innocent civilians is up over 25,000 or 30,000 now. They have antagonized the whole Arab and Muslim world, and they blindly support any genocidal thing that Israel does to the Palestinians. They are hacking away at our civil rights at home and trying to bankrupt the federal government so that they can privatize everything to be run for profit. The Cheney Regime is full of insane liars and they have to be sent packing. People better start getting the facts. For starters, I recommend Democracy Now with Amy Goodman on Pacifica radio or streaming internet. They are one of the very few TV and radio sources of uncensored real news. Also, foreign news sources like Canadian, and British. The real info is out there if you look.

**One fan site gal wrote, "I like U-Ron's advice of not letting anyone grind me down. He's a wise man. I know this isn't the U-Ron life dedication site or like U-Ron fan club, but shit, he knows what's up dammit! However, he told me once that if you're really passionate about what you do, you're bound to step on someone's toes sooner or later." Lastly, whose toes do you think you've stepped on the way to, well, fulfilling your passions? And, looking back over these past two decades, what are your passions, and how have they changed?**

Those are two huge questions. I don't know if I can even answer them. There are probably a lot of people's toes that I stepped on getting myself strung out on coke. That was a fucking nightmare that lasted about six years, more than half of which were post Really Red. I let a lot of people down with that shit, but I let myself down the most. That was a total perversion of passion. Also, I'm sure that in the struggle to make Really Red what we were, I probably acted like a jerk to a lot of people along the way. Regretfully the list is probably long.

My passion now is to try to understand what being alive is. That's a big old Zen one. The investigation of consciousness. The ancient "understanding myself" bit. The inner personal work. I am passionate about my lady, too. The other thing that I'm still very passionate about is doing what I can to promote freedom and justice. The outer impersonal work. Of course, both of these passions take a lot of learning and that is endless. I'm passionate about my kilt and about a little hell raising now and again.

REALLY RED

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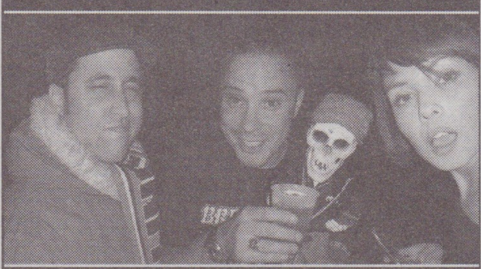

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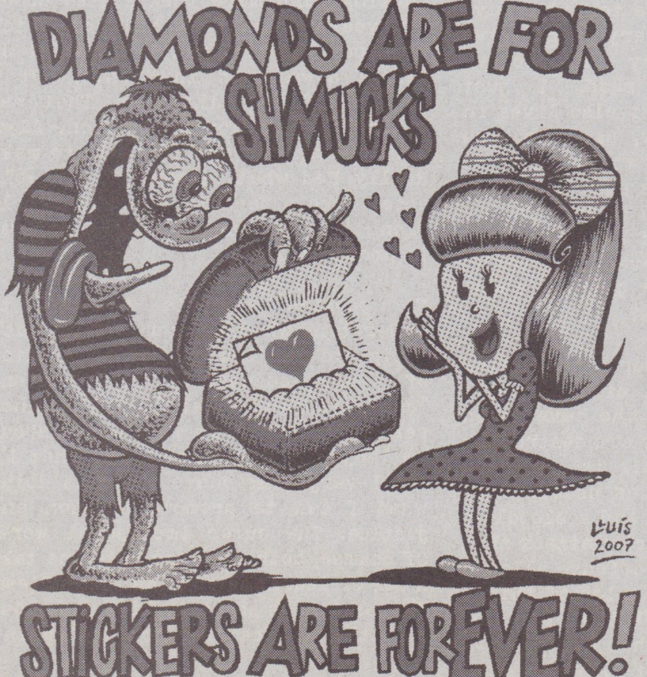


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# SEDITION

*Sedition was an amazing hardcore band from Glasgow that had a really intense sound. Whilst my friends and I were enjoying English bands such as Doom and Extreme Noise Terror, Sedition had a really manic edge that reminds me more of Italian hardcore like Negazione, Indigesti, or Wretched and also lyrically addressed subjects that few punk bands had covered at that time. I'd also like to say something about beards, kilts, and dreadlocks but that's all covered herein. Sedition recently played some reunion gigs with Hiatus, Cress, and others. To quote a friend from Glasgow, "That's what you want from a punk band, a speed freak drummer who plays everything way too fast and a singer who passes out on stage because he's screaming so hard." This interview was conducted by Ian Glasper as part of the research for his book* Trapped In A Scene *with Angus Quinn. Thanks to Ian and Angus for passing this on.*
*Introduction by Mark Ism*
*Interview by Ian Glasper*
*Photos by Merwain Graham*

**MRR: Where, when, and why did Chaotic Subversion form, and what did they release during their existence? I don't think I ever heard them, to be honest. What style were they?**

Chaotic Subversion started after I left school. Davie, who played guitar, met me in the street with a mutual acquaintance and asked me if I had a guitar, to which I answered "yes." "Do you wanna play guitar in a band?" he asked. "No," I replied. "Can you sing?" he then asked. "No," I answered. "Do you wanna sing in a band?" he asked. "All right," I said. And that was that. We played fairly bog standard '80s UK punk/hardcore. We played all over Britain and Ireland, released three or four demos, and had a few tracks released on various vinyl and cassette comps.

**MRR: What were Sedition's primary influences, musically and lyrically, locally and nationally/internationally? Were there any Glasgow bands in particular that were an inspiration to you?**

The sound we ended up with just grew from what we did previously in Chaotic Subversion. The music got progressively faster which led to the vocals becoming more abrasive and the lyrics began to be shaped around what we were getting into ourselves, becoming more aware of the environmental crisis around us, and getting more and more into our Celtic roots and culture, whilst learning about other native and indigenous cultures around the world. We all listened to different bands. I remember Billy having a Brazilian hardcore phase, Brycey liked a lot of US hardcore, whilst I mostly listened to UK hardcore of the time. There were no specific bands we were collectively

influenced by. The sound just came from us all getting together and pitching in our own two pence worth.

**MRR: Do you know where, when, and with who the first Sedition gig was? How did it go?**

There is a bit of controversy around this subject really. Sned [Flat Earth] says the first Sedition gig was in Edinburgh with Generic, his band at the time, but there was a whole crossover period where we stopped calling ourselves Chaotic Subversion and started calling ourselves Sedition as we morphed from one to the other. I remember announcing the name change at a few different gigs before we played but I've no idea which one was the first. We were probably billed as Chaotic Subversion at one or two of those gigs, so maybe the Generic one was the first one we were actually billed as Sedition?

**MRR: How did you come to join the band, and why did Davie leave? What bands had you played in previously yourself?**

As I said before, Brycey, Davie, Jamie, and myself were all in the last line-up of Chaotic Subversion before morphing into Sedition. We knew Billy from when he played in the Disturbed, whom we had gigged with a lot, and met him at a Motörhead gig we were at in Glasgow one night. In a drunken stupor he proceeded to convince us that what we really needed was a second guitarist, which was lucky because we only rehearsed a few times with that line-up before Davie left to do other things, leaving Billy to learn the tracks for the Pink Turds split as fast as possible. Davie has played in one or two other bands over the years but nothing long-term since Chaotic Subversion and Sedition.

**MRR: What was the split LP with Pink Turds From Outer Space called? Where and when was it recorded, and who with? Do you think those recordings have stood the test of time?**

The Pink Turds split was recorded in 1990, and myself and Brycey released it ourselves originally. It was self-titled, easy, you know what you're getting that way. I think we were all pretty happy with the recording at the time but I think we all agreed Pink Turds had a much better sound on their side. Although the Sedition stuff sounds pretty raw nowadays, the Pink Turds stuff still packs a good punch by today's standards, and it's still the best stuff they done I reckon. We always struggled with production, as we were clueless about stuff like that. Although the guy behind the mixing desk knew his stuff and was good at his job, he had never heard the type of music we were playing before so never really new how to deal with the sound we were after. If the recordings haven't stood the test of time I'd say it was only production that let them down as there's still some great hardcore songs on there.

**MRR: How did you hook up with Pink Turds anyway? What are your fondest memories of the gigs you played together?**

We played a few times in Belfast with Chaotic Subversion and then with Sedition and made a lot of good friends over the years, so we hooked up on quite a regular basis back then, either over there or over here. So when it came to making the split LP we were already good mates with a few of the folks in Pink Turds. We only played a few gigs together I think but they were usually very drunken affairs. Unfortunately there is very little memory of them at all, but gigs in the old Warzone venue were always a great laugh, much more of a social gathering than a lot of gigs are nowadays I think.

**MRR: Why did Jamie leave, and where did you find his replacement, Martin?**

Jamie, I reckon, just got fed up with the whole band thing cos he seemed to disappear from the whole scene for a long time and only surfaced again when he started drumming for Quarantine years later, only to drop out of that not long after they started too. We already knew Martin when Jamie left, although we hadn't heard him drum, so it was just a case of asking him to do it really. Thankfully he said "yes," and thankfully he could drum.

**MRR: How was that first tour of Europe for you guys? How long were you out there? How did it go? Highlights? Low points?**

The first tour was excellent. We were like kids in a sweet shop, hyper-excited. The gigs were great, the people were great, we made loads of new friends, and we had a great laugh. The only low was not getting through the Swiss border cos we were driving an old ambulance painted with the anarchist flag on the sides, teeth and eyes on the front, and where it used to say "Ambulance" read "Am-yer-bus"! One By One, who we were touring with, got through OK because they were driving a nice blue transit van so it meant they had to play the gigs in Switzerland and Italy on their own, which pissed us off no end. Both the tours of Europe we did were with One By One, they were great friends and took us under their wing and looked after us well.

**MRR: Where, when, and with whom did you record the *Earthbeat* LP, and how do you feel the band had progressed from the first album you did?**

The *Earthbeat* LP was conceived during the first tour with One By One. Sned and Alec, who played in One By One, were doing Flat Earth Records together at that time and asked us to record an album for the label. When we pitched the *Earthbeat* idea, e.g. songs, artwork, sackcloth sleeve and all to them, they were really up for doing it exactly as we wanted it, so it worked out quite well actually. Musically and aesthetically the *Earthbeat* album turned out exactly how we wanted it. Again the only thing that let it down in my opinion was the sound production. The overall sound was very weak, worse so than the Pink Turds split, but again we were clueless when it came to mixing and getting the sound we wanted and the engineers from the studio we used did the best they could. But we were pretty happy to have been able to make that album, and to do it how we wanted. Flat Earth was always good for that. I think musically it had progressed a lot from the stuff on the split; we were experimenting with how the drums, guitar, and vocals could all work together within the boundaries of a hardcore band but still give the feel of earthy tribal rhythms too. I'm pretty chuffed with some of the stuff we came up with on it. It was our first time using a lot of samples and background sounds too, and although some would say it was rather overdone I think again it was lack of experience. If we'd known how to do it properly it could, or should, have worked really well. But again, I think the idea is there and it helped create the feeling we were trying to put across at the time.

**MRR: Please tell us how you hooked up with Nabate Records, and the relationship you enjoyed with Disaffect.**

We were friends with Alain who ran Nabate Records for a long time before we did the split EP with Disaffect, which was co-released by Flat Earth and Nabate Records. Disaffect had released most of their stuff on Nabate at that point and we'd released most of ours on Flat Earth. Disaffect and ourselves were good friends for a long time, and still are, and we played together a lot over the years. Although we never toured together strangely enough, various band members had shared flats in Glasgow together. Billy, who ended up playing in Disaffect too, again by convincing them they needed a second guitarist, was going out with Lynne, Disaffect vocalist, so at times it never really seemed like two bands at all. As a result, even today some folks still think we had more band members in common than just Billy.

**MRR Why did you guys split in '94? Where and when was the last gig, and how was it? Did you know it was going to be your last gig before you played it?**

The last gig was in Leister, and if I remember right it was rumored beforehand to be our last gig, but I've still no idea why that was because we certainly never intended it to be at the time, although that's how it turned out in the end. The gig was amazing, though. It was really busy. We played with Disaffect and Oi Polloi; it was an all-Scottish band night and wearing a kilt got you in cheaper. A good laugh and a great last gig I reckon. The actual band split came about not long after that gig came and went, and probably after we had successfully quashed the rumors of it being our last gig too. Up until that time myself and Brycey had shared flats and houses, which made it easy as we were writing most of the stuff for the band, but by the time the split happened we were both living at opposite ends of the country, so we were no longer able to easily write stuff together anymore. It was becoming more and more difficult to get together regularly enough to work on new stuff, and this inevitably led to a great deal of frustration and a break down in the relationship, which finally ended in the band splitting.

**MRR: Any regrets as to how and why you guys came to call it a day?**

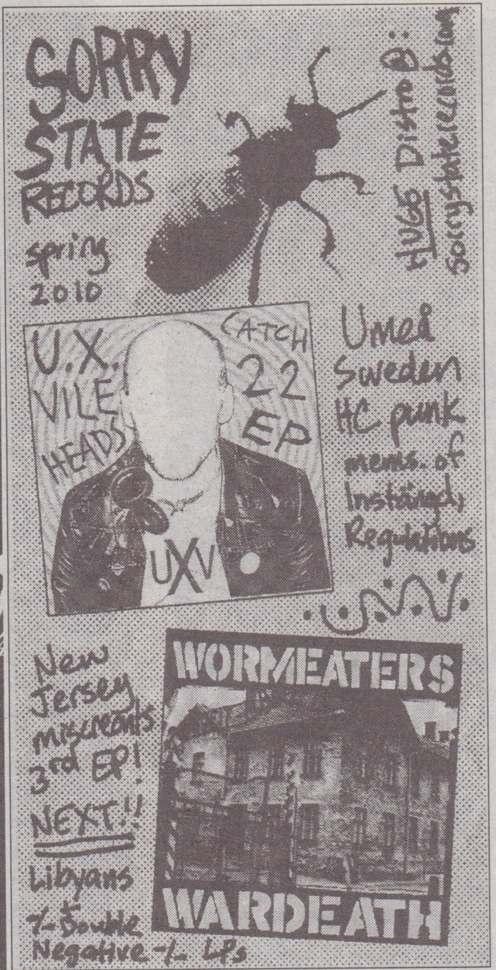
Regrets would only be with the breakdown in my relationship with Brycey, which resulted in the band split, but thankfully now we're still good friends despite this. But as for the band, I feel extremely lucky to have been able to do everything we did and proud to have been a part of it. We made loads of good friends, traveled all over Britain and Europe, and all because we enjoyed making noise together with our mates. Great stuff! No regrets!

**MRR: What are you all doing nowadays, both musically and otherwise?**

Myself and Billy went on to play in Scatha with Andy and I.B. from Disaffect and Jason from Stretcheads, which lasted from 1995 until 2002, after which I started T.R.I.B.E., which is still ongoing today. Brycey went on to play in Dawson until they split sometime in the late '90s. Martin hadn't played the drums at all until we recently [2008] reformed Sedition to play at a memorial gig for a good friend who had died the previous year.

**MRR: How do you regard the musical legacy you left behind? How would you like Sedition to be remembered, if indeed you have a mind to be remembered at all?**

I think we achieved what we wanted with the band. We pranced about in kilts for a few years playing music we enjoyed playing whilst ranting our thoughts and feelings at folks, forcing them to think about what we had to say whether they agreed with it or not. I think different people remember us for different things, some the kilts, beards, and dreadlocks, some the noise and energy, and hopefully at least a few will remember what we were shouting about. That's good enough for me at least.

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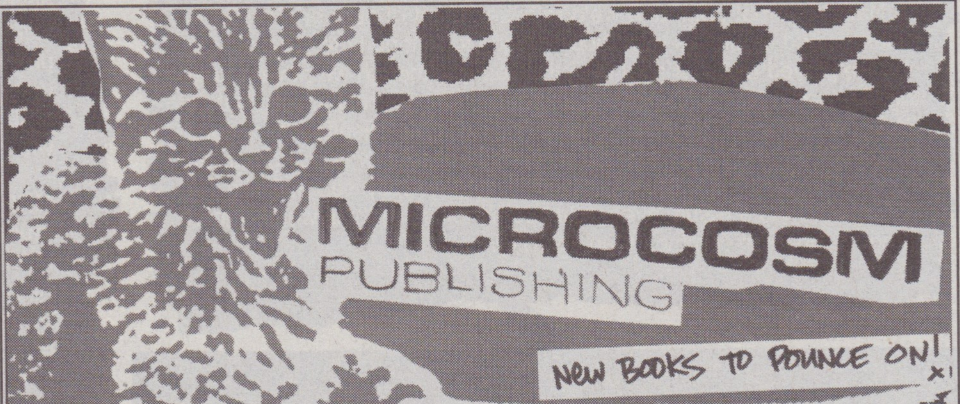


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# SLANG

*Slang are from Sapporo, Japan and have been a band for 22 years. They've released a number of full length albums, singles and appeared on countless compilations over the years, and will be touring the USA through May and June 2010. Here's an interview done via email with the singer, Ko.*
*Interview by Jesse Conway, Photo by Maya.*

**MRR: Tell us about Slang's history—when did you start, who plays what, any changes over the years, and a discography.**
First off, thanks for the interview. Current members are Ko (vocals), Kiyo (guitar), Sakuma (bass) and Kohey (drums). Slang started in 1988 and I played guitar for the first ten years. The original vocalist did one album, another vocalist did the next album and I started doing vocals after him. I've done two albums on vocals and we're working on a third now, making that five full-lengths total. We've done about five 7"s, been on a lot of comps and have had so many member changes, I've lost track!!

**MRR: I imagine you've played with many foreign bands over the years. Who have been some of the most memorable bands to play with?**
Chaos UK / Disorder / The Varukers / GBH / The Business / Agnostic Front / Madball / Break Down / Vison Of Disorder / Extreme Noise Terror / Discharge / Fugazi and a ton more... We're really happy to have played with all these bands and I can't really pick a favorite.

**MRR: Has Slang ever played outside of Japan?**
Just South Korea.

**MRR: In Japan, many bands stay together for a long time, despite member/direction changes and long periods of inactivity. In America, people break up and start new bands often. What do you think are some of the reasons behind this difference?**
I really can't imagine the cause! From my experience here, I know lots of people who have stuck with punk for a long time. I'm almost 40 and there are tons of punks around Japan that influenced me as a kid that are still with it. I'm from Sapporo (about a day's journey north from Tokyo) and here we have a slew of punk rock and skinhead bands that have been going for over 20 years now.

**MRR: What are you looking forward to doing in America on tour?**
The tour schedule is pretty tight, so we probably can't do any sightseeing, right? Seriously though, even when we do Japanese tours, we skip the touristy stuff as much as we may want to do it. Since we give it our all at every show, we need some time to rest in between gigs so the next one is as good as or better than the last!

When I was a kid, I grew up out in the countryside. The first punk bands I heard were English and American, so I'm really happy to get a chance for Americans to hear our music. Even if I can't speak much English, you can understand what I'm saying through music. That's what I'm looking forward to the most.

**MRR: What is your favorite type of punk fashion? UK82? UK Crust? '77 punk? New Wave? Crasher Crust?**
Haha, they're all fine with me. Although Confuse has had an especially large influence on me. If you asked me a long time ago, I would've told you a simple style, like GBH.

**MRR: What is the scene like in your town, Sapporo? How often can you play and where do you play? Would you recommend punks go there when they visit Japan?**
There are lots of different bands in Sapporo. You name it: '80s, crust, oi, japcore, metallic HC, emo, we've got them all. There's the occasional squabble, but everyone gets along pretty well. If you're in Japan, definitely, come to Klub Counter Action in Sapporo. Why? Because I've been running the place since 1995!!

**MRR: What are your day jobs?**
Like I said, I run Klub Counter Action. I also do a label called Straight Up Records.

**MRR: What's your favorite thing to drink?**
SAKE!! You'd be hard pressed to find me without a diet cola during the day. And of course, green tea.

**MRR: When will you quit punk?**
I've been a punk since I was twelve or thirteen. I'm still trying to find my way in life and honestly, I never figured out how to turn into an adult. Take that as you will!

**MRR: Any last words?**
After 22 years, Slang finally gets an American tour! We're really grateful that Timmy set this up. It'll be the first time many people see us and we'll be playing lots of new songs - we're gonna play our best at every gig!! See you in the streets!!

Slang America Tour:
May 28th: Austin, TX Chaos in Tejas Fest After Party at the Broken Neck w/ World Burns to Death
May 29th: Chaos in Tejas Fest at Emo's w/ Poison Idea, The Pist, Morpheme, La Urss, Wild Thing and Deskonocidos
May 31st: Dallas, TX the Prophet Bat w/ Subhumans, Cross Stitched Eyes and Unit 21
June 1st: Dallas, TX at the Phoenix Project (406 S. Haskell St.) w/ Mind Eraser, Tolar and Power Trip (NO Slang)
June 2nd: St Louis, MO at Fubar (3108 Locust St) w/ Mind Eraser, Cardiac Arrest and Suburban Smash
June 3rd: Milwaukee, WI at the Eagles Nest (825 East Center St) w/ Mind Eraser
June 4th: Chicago, IL w/ Mind Eraser
June 5th: Detroit, MI at the Corktown Tavern w/ Mind Eraser, Nightbringer, Final Assault and Disconnected
June 6th: Cleveland, OH at Now That's Class w/ Mind Eraser, Inmates, Pigsticker and Mad Minds
June 7th: Pittsburgh, PA at the Helter Shelter w/ Mind Eraser, Ecoli and Kim Phuc
June 8th: Albany, NY at Valentines w/ Mind Eraser, Brain Killer, Coughing Fit, Pointblank and Damnation Ally
June 9th: Brooklyn, NY at Death By Audio w/ Mind Eraser, Nomos and Rival Mob
June 10th: Boston, MA at the Mass Art w/ World Burns to Death and Mind Eraser
June 11th: Providence, RI at AS220 w/ World Burns to Death, Neon Bitches, Cough and Elder
June 12th: NYC, NY at the Cake Shop w/ World Burns to Death, Absurd System and Perdition
June 13th: Philadelphia, PA at the First Unitarian Church w/ World Burns to Death, Blacklisted, Blood Bomber and Cobra Lung
June 14th OFF
June 15th: Baltimore, MD at the Barclay House (2101 Barclay St) w/ World Burns to Death, The Wankys and Lotus Fucker and Chaos Destroy
June 16th: Richmond, VA Plaza Bowl w/ World Burns to Death, Wasted Time, Skin Like Iron, Pollution, White Lung and Dry Spell
June 17th: Raleigh, NC at Ahhh Peele Art Gallery w/ World Burns to Death
June 18th: Atlanta, GA at 585 Wells St w/ World Burns to Death, American Cheeseburger and Bukkake Boys
June 19th: New Orleans, LA at the Hiho lounge w/ World Burns to Death and Bastard Noise
June 20th: Houston, TX at the Mink w/ World Burns to Death
June 21st :Austin, TX at the Mohawk w/ World Burns to Death, Unit 21 and Criaturas.

# MARCEL DUCHAMP

*Taking inspiration from their Dada artist namesake, Marcel Duchamp is a Chilean punk band that incorporates the intellectual and the absurd, reacting to political and social issues wwith music. Their combination of humor and severity is translated though hardcore punk that incorporates slight elements of grindcore to achieve their awesome sound. Here is their story.*

*Interview by Bruno Battaglia, Photos by Gary Go!*

**MRR: Let's start with the basics. How did the band start and who are the members? Is there some sort of work ethic within the band?**

The band started in the summer of 2001 in Santiago, Chile. The members are Francisco Morales on drums, Joaquín Contreras vocals and bass, and Rodrigo Robles on guitar. After a few years, Rodrigo left the band to spend more time with his other project Malgobierno. Immediately after that Jaime Valderrama, our current guitarist, starting practicing with us and he's since become a very important part of the band. As far as that goes, all three of us have the same amount of say as far as writing songs, giving opinions and managing any of the band activities.

Really, any ethic we may have comes from each of our life experiences, one where we don't try to impose opinions on others. Over time we've really come together, musically, as well as in lifestyle. As far as personal life goes, I think that when looking for or defining a work ethic within the band, we agree in the participation linked to self-management in all work environments, and at the same time reject participating in a proactive way with the imposed institutionalization. Understand that I am talking about the band as a mechanism of expression that goes beyond financial gain, or, even better said, subsistence economy.

Another important aspect is that we're friends first and band members second. We share common visions about a lifestyle that is close to nature and we enjoy spending free time with friends and family. We don't like the speed of the city nor the idea of being a famous band. At the same time we're not a very well known band because we're normally more interested in what's going on with one another than the band.

**MRR: Why'd you choose the name Marcel Duchamp? Is there some relationship between the artist and the music that you all make and want to transmit?**

Yeah, we named ourselves after the conceptual artist that was associated with the dada movement and surrealism. When we started the band, we gave our self the name because our music was inspired by Dadaism. It actually had little to do with what we do now. We were a grindcore band without lyrics, just bass and drums and lots of screaming.

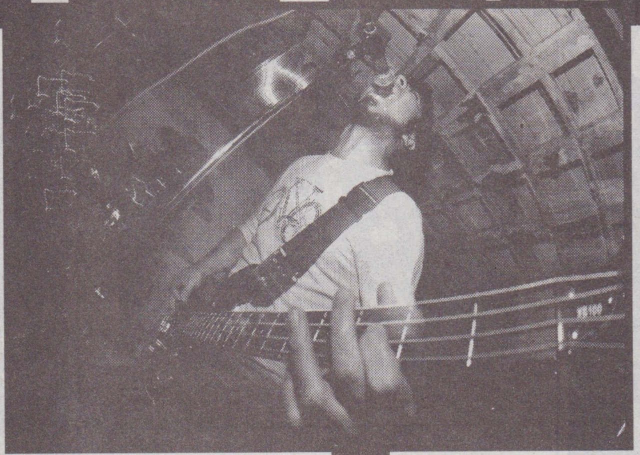
We thought it was an entertaining name, but little by little it started to become related with the rupturista movement in Chilean punk. And it has a little to do with the charge of intellectualism, or at least the idea of thinking a little about things, not being direct in the message, but understanding that there's a strong subjective charge within the communication through the media of music. On the other hand, it seemed like Marcel Duchamp was a guy with a pretty good sense of humor, and that also seemed close to our method, finding the joke within serious things and giving importance to things that don't make much sense for most people. There's also an obsession in how it's done, more than with the actual results.

**MRR: Chile, and South America in general, is a hard area to subsist for a punk band in comparison with the first world. How do you guys handle the situation? What is your experience of DIY in Chile?**

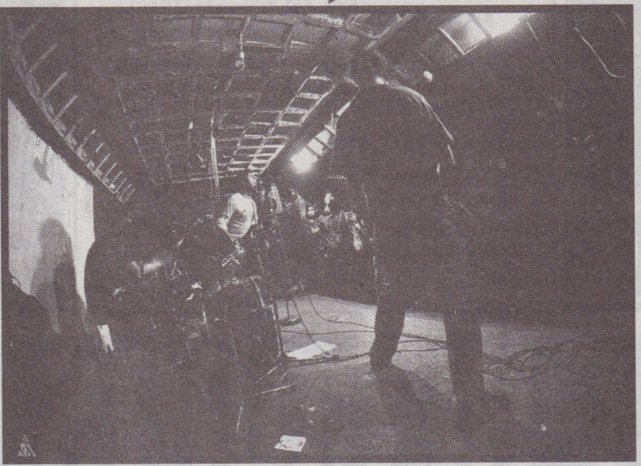
First of all, for me punk is not about economic subsistence. It's an alternative expression that builds consciousness against the real word. That can include failures, happiness, success, and utopias. That's how DIY arose ideologically as a clear alternative. In the case of Chile we've had really good experiences, getting the chance to travel a see different places along with making new bonds built on respect and caring with organizations and other like-minded people. In that way we've reached a lot of our objectives as a band: play music, record it, and travel within Chile. We don't have a lot of expectations in general. Taking the hardest path means maybe more risk, but it also offers a variety of situations that may or may not happen and that make life more entertaining. It's true, if the economic situation was different maybe we wouldn't be making punk music.

**MRR: I know that you guys don't just play in Marcel Duchamp and that you have other projects. Could you tell us what else you do besides playing?**

Jaime just finished a degree in geography, and he also has a band called Disputa. Francisco is a teacher of general education and technical drawing, and with his partner he has a traveling fair of self-managed products called Pastoseco. This has been a refreshing activity that brings together many people including music sometimes, and he also plays in Colectivo NO, an experimental noise combo composed of many people from different bands. He and Joaquin are in another experimental band called ojO. Also, we've played in a lot of different bands together and separately, and we've been failing musically together for more than ten years. Joaquín is also a graphic designer and he has a design collective called Sindicato de la Imagen that mixes education, politics and design.



**MRR: Since the beginning, your lyrics have transmitted a message that's pretty critical of punk as a counterculture. Can you tell me what your vision of punk is in general and what is its importance in the world?**



Punk, in my case, came up as a counter stance to the habitual model of life, where not only do you have to follow an evolutionary machinery of the capitalist system, but you also have to help to maintain it working. As you get to know this idea as a counterculture you start finding many inserted realities, of which some from the beginning were never considered. As far as Chile goes, everything started with a really self-destructive idea, where punk was only for following the robotic model of actions and phrases, without arguments that nevertheless had strong repercussions in the context of historic existence (the dictatorship of Pinochet). With the passing of time you start to notice that in some way these things are inserted into a system that's already been articulated, but the need to acquire a more ideological attitude gives you the tools to question and offer other alternatives that are also viable. The thing is that in Chile punk hasn't achieved any status as a counterculture, even more so, it's been ridiculed and even manipulated for lucrative ends. Maybe that's where the criticism starts, as much for being a commodity that many accept and adopt as an image as well as for those who maintain today that self-destructive idea. So, if there are a lot of people who consider themselves punk, and it vindicates the idea of counterculture, what we see is that there exists a group tied to punk music, another to the self-destructive aesthetic and another to the liberation movement.

So in that way, we don't consider ourselves punks (in Chile that can be taken to mean different things), but we play punk music. Even more so, we consider ourselves to be *libertarios* or akin to anarchism as people. And if we end up playing electronic music, it's all the same. We don't dress like punks and the subject of whether or not we're punks doesn't matter to us. There are more important things, and more urgent things to talk about.

**MRR: I know that a while ago you released a vinyl edition of one of your recent records, which is difficult for a band to do in South America. Talk about how you had that opportunity and where we can find your other records.**

Yeah, that was a surprise for us too. We got an email from the label Masapunk, that has put out all of our records, saying that a label in France wanted to put out our last record. We don't know why someone in the French Alps wants to put out a small band in Chile, in Spanish, but we got word that some people appreciate what we do and in faraway places. Maybe it's the most concrete example of that and we're happy. The strangest thing is that in Chile there's no vinyl culture, none of us have record players, here it's only for collectors.

In France and Europe, the label Les Nains Aussi distributes the records. Here in South America Masapunk does it, and we also have some copies ourselves. In the USA, we have no idea, but it seems like Nicolas from the label has sent some. The link for the label is: www.lustucrust.org/lesnainsaussi_infos.html

**MRR: For those who know nothing about punk in Chile, what bands, labels, distros, blogs, etc. can you recommend?**

For starters, I'd recommend Masapunk, Germenterror, Carcaj, which have a good number of interesting projects. Productora Mutante here has all the experimental sounds of Chile from punk to electroacustica. Punk bands: Malgobierno, Pukora, Disputa, Piromanos del ritmo…

**MRR: What plans does Marcel Duchamp have for the future?**

Get together. We're a little far a part geographically, but we're about to have some moving houses in the future. We have to mix a few things that are coming up, record some others, experiment, and practice.

Discografia Marcel Duchamp:

Ready made EP (2001) Collage Discos Unidos.
Split con Redención 911 (2001) Masapunk.
El disket (2002) Collage
Buscando Luz De Topos (2002) Masapunk.
Split con Biofilo Panclasta (2003) Masapunk.
Split con A los Mártires de Chicago (2004) Collage Discos Unidos
Split con Disexión (2003) Masapunk.
Split con Doña Maldad (2004) Masapunk - CRA/El Libertario
Contra Nosotros Mismos CD (2006) Masapunk - Disyouth - Desligamiento - Maldita Cruz - CRA/El libertario
Contra Nosotros Mismos LP (2009) Masapunk - Les Nains Aussi - Vaillent Fred

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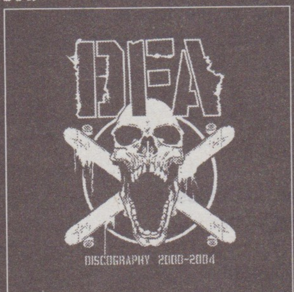


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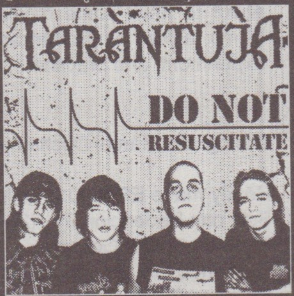


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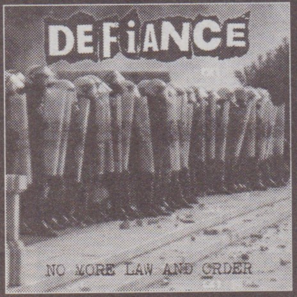


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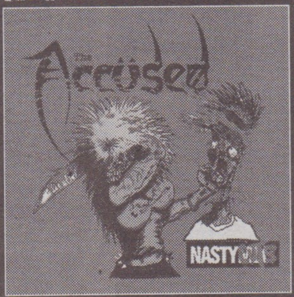


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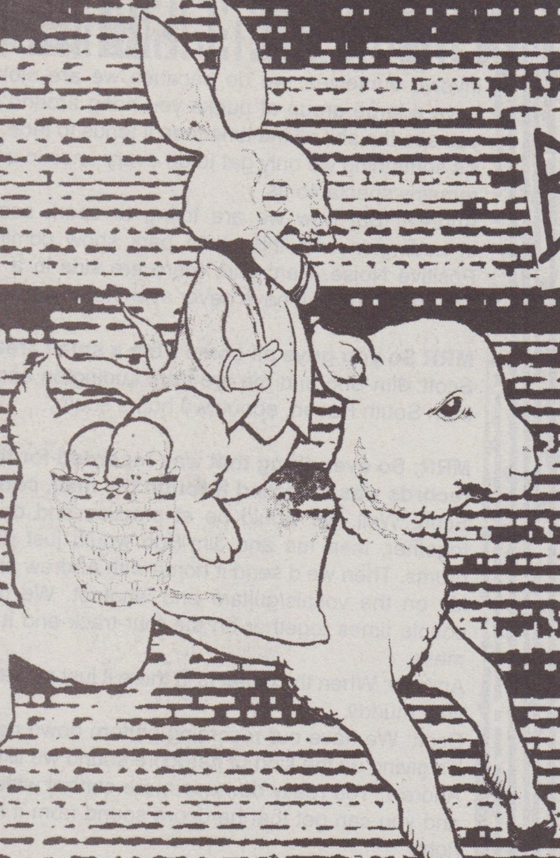
# BUNNY SKULLS



*This interview was done in person at the Positive Noise/Cult Ritual show in Grand Rapids, Michigan. For those not familiar with Bunny Skulls, they are a hardcore band from West Michigan that has two releases on Punks Before Profits Records. They have a couple notable members—one being Scott Bentz who does a lot of artwork for hardcore punk bands. Then we have Andrew Lerston from the band Vilently Ill. To me, Bunny Skulls is what hardcore punk should be about—a couple of nerds getting together and making noise. It's that simple. If you get a chance to see them, live you will think at first, "Whose dad is here to pick them up?" because these guys don't care about looking punk, they just are. Also, Andrew has been going to hardcore shows since the early '80s, but he still loves it and loves seeing new bands. If you like hardcore that's real and is done for the right reasons, then read on.*
*Interview by Ryan Cappelletti.*

**MRR: OK, give me the names and who does what.**
Andrew: I play guitar/sing.
Scott: I play drums.
Jim-Bob: I play bass.

**MRR: So this guy Jim-Bob I have never seen in my life, and Scott you have been living in the Tampa, Florida area for the past few years—so how did Bunny Skulls come about?**
Andrew: Well, Jim-Bob was a package deal—he came with Scott.
Scott: Right before I moved to Florida, I wrote a letter to Andrew because I could not get anything going in Lansing, Michigan that was not a Dave Matthews Band cover band. So I wrote to Andrew and asked him if he ever considered having a drummer for Vilently Ill since I have been a longtime fan of the band. But I ended up selling my house and moving down to Florida with my wife. So after a few years in Florida, we decided to come visit for a summer in Michigan. That turned into staying in Michigan and I got back in touch Andrew and re-sparked the idea of me playing drums in the band. Instead we decided to do a new band called Bunny Skulls, and we started as a two-piece.
Andrew: I never thought I would find a drummer that acted like a human version of a drum machine. You know, just the one hardcore beat.
Scott: That is really all I can do, that one beat, and that's why I play this music and I don't get paid.

**MRR: So why the name Bunny Skulls?**
Andrew: Well, we had a list and Bunny Skulls was a kind of a cool hardcore name, and it just ended up sticking. The real story behind the name is I had this old cat that looked like she would never hurt a fly. Well she turned out to be dragging bunnies under my back porch and massacring them, so a large pile of bunny skulls started to gather under that porch and the name was born.

**MRR: At first I did think the name was pretty dumb but now hearing that I am like "wow." Plus, look at older bands with lame names that eventually became classic.**
Andrew: Well you can also look at it as B.S., which way cooler.
Scott: Before our first show, Andrew showed up with three sets of bunny ears for us to wear so we could became the Dead Milkmen of West Michigan punk. Once in a while you will catch us wearing the bunny ears, but it's not a joke.

**MRR: So where the hell did Jim-Bob come from?**
Andrew: Well, he is married to Scott's sister so we just made him do it.

**MRR: So is this your entrance into hardcore?**
Jim-Bob: Well it is and it isn't. This made me more interested in it for sure. I played in other bands but never any hardcore punk bands like this.
Scott: At the start we had no place to play, so we started practicing at Jim-Bob's house. He already had everything we needed, so we just asked him to play with us and he picked it all up very easy.

**MRR: Who writes the songs for the most part? I mean, you have 51 songs that you can play right now, correct?**
Andrew: Yes. something like that.

**MRR: How do you write 51 songs that are under a minute and different enough to remember?**
Andrew: This is not rocket science, we are not the Rolling Stones. You just pick three chords and go—it's like playing the lottery.

**MRR: On the 18-song new EP you guys just did, my favorite songs are in the middle of the record and also at the end. You are holding people's attention even though you are**

jamming so many songs on one record.**
Andrew: Sometimes we will steal another band's songs and we won't even know it because are just making stuff up as we go.
Scott: Like one time Andrew was playing a Minor Threat song and we were like, "well, just change a note and it's ours," but then you think, "fuck even changing it, let's just play it." At least we can steal from the best.
Andrew: All the great riffs have been done, so why not just steal it, put some new words on it and give it some new life, maybe add a new breakdown or something? Fuck it.

**MRR: Hardcore does have a great formula, we can't deny that. Andrew, after being in Vilently Ill for over 20 years, how do you stay interested? Because we have a lot of old, jaded guys coming back around either talking shit or starting up their old band just to cash in. What do you think of the whole "It's nothing like it was then, and these kids just have it easy" attitude?**
Andrew: It all just goes in circles. I think hardcore now is as strong as it was in the early '80s. You see a lot of new energy and new enthusiasm and new bands. I mean, it's still feeding on that same basic energy.
Scott: A lot of the same old guys see it backwards. They changed, they moved on, not the music. They hang around seeing bar bands and getting wasted and talking about the old days, so they grow out of it, and that's fine.
Andrew: There are two groups of people. There are the ones who get into it because his/her friends do, so they hang around the scene for a couple years then move on to some other fucking trend to hob on. Then you have the other group that is drawn to this, that's it. They don't do it for some trendy bullshit thing, but because they feel it and they love the sound of it all. This doesn't mean I am not going to play a jazz album sometime and get into that too, but I love my hardcore.
Scott: I think one of the huge things that keeps Andrew and myself into punk and hardcore is our isolation from other punk rockers. We both live in the middle of nowhere so we have nothing going on in our area. So when we get a chance to involve ourselves, we do because we are stoked. If you have a large group of punks you hang around every day, you see the shit all the time then it tends to fade, but for us, it's something we only get to do every once in a while, so it remains special to us.
Andrew: But now we are trying to spark something up in Ludington with this skate park show coming up with Positive Noise. I am sure there are kids in a small town like Ludington that have never even heard hardcore before.

**MRR So you guys all come from a small area then?**
Scott: Jim-Bob and me are from Ludington and Andrew is from South Haven, about two hours south.

**MRR: So everything that was recorded for the first two records was recorded through the mail, correct?**
Scott: Well, we would be at practice and do our songs together, then me and Jim-Bob would just do bass and drums. Then we'd send it home with Andrew and he would lay on the vocals/guitars and whatnot. We did record a couple times together on the four-track and it was a total mess.
Andrew: When the guitar is in there it just makes everything very muddy.
Scott: We have our recording pattern down right now, and it's giving us the kind of hardcore sound we like.
Andrew: You really do have more control with a four-track and you can get that hardcore sound from it if you work it right.

**MRR: The Tascam four-track is the weapon of choice when it comes to recording, right? I love it—the new EP is so raw and full of energy.**
Andrew: We want the raw sound.
Scott: Most of the bands we draw from have recordings that are always off the wall and the levels are fucked up and all loud and crazy.
Andrew: We think hardcore punk should be recorded raw and in your face. That's why a lot of times, a band's demo will be some of the best stuff they ever did. I like my guitar tone to sound like an angry hornets' nest... I never met distortion I didn't like. Maybe it's part of my insecurity where I'm just trying to hide behind distortion, but either way I love it and I just can't get enough of it.
Scott: Some of my favorite parts of songs are the beginnings or ends, with all the fucked up feedback that's going on.

**MRR: So Grand Rapids has the most churches per capita and West Michigan in general has a lot of religion going on. We also have a very strong Christian punk scene. It's pretty fucking unbelievable but it's happening. So you have the song "Nothing Fails Like Prayer," what do you feel about all these hip Christians around this area?**
Scott: To me it just seems like it makes more sense to go do something about your fucked up situation then complain about it. You're just sitting around waiting for some person to make everything in your life OK, but instead just do something for yourself and don't waste your time.
Andrew: Hardcore punk is very reactionary and so the more churches we get the more hardcore songs will be written against them. It's like, whatever you got we're against it.

"NICE HOOTERS SHIRT FUCKFACE"

Scott: Punks tend to dwell on things that are fucked up. Even when things are not so fucked up we will find something that is fucked up and sing about it.
Andrew: But now we think about we need to make more anti-Christian hardcore songs.

**MRR: Andrew, you have a story about when you came to a show and you had a run-in with some kids into Christ—tell us about that.**
Andrew: I went to this random show at the DAAC in Grand Rapids and all these punks were hanging around the place with leather jackets and tattoos so I was like "cool, a hardcore show." So these bands are setting up and I am thinking, "man, this looks like a good show." Then this lady comes up to me and says "we are going to do a prayer service before the show starts," and so I am like "fuck this, I am out of this place." It was one of the most fucked things I have ever seen—I could not fucking believe it. There is just no place for shit like that in punk.
Scott: I think with modern punk it's more about clothes and fashion, and because of this, the "I hate everything" attitude gets lost. So Christian punks almost make sense in modern times because these are not reactionary people. These kids are more into looking cool then playing all fucked up and hating the world.
Andrew: I like the fact that we look like straight-laced Christian dudes that came into show and just play some gnarly, fucked-up noise and blow kids away, rather than walking in with a mohawk and getting people's expectations up. I say fuck the expectations, that's the fun of it. Punk is about anger.

**MRR: It seems like it's so apathetic here in Grand Rapids, I don't even know why those kids come around...**
Scott: I think people have it too good. When hardcore first came out in the early '80s, you were right in the middle of the Cold War. You had to do drills and hide under your desk because you thought the bomb was going to go off at anytime, but now we have iPods and computers. They can skate down to the mall and go to Jamba Juice and do whatever. With all these good things happening it makes the hardcore scene less urgent. It's like, they don't need that outlet when things are going well.

**MRR: It's like, we have enough little toys to make us feel like the world is not that fucked up... It's all the distractions they have created for us so we remain OK and silent and calm...**
Andrew: There's nothing more fucked up than watching somebody walk down the street next to each other and just texting each other instead of having a conversation.

**MRR: It's like being at a show and you start talking to somebody and they've got their phone and they've got nine other people talking all at once and it's like "fuck you I'm done talking to you because you don't care." It's just too much communication.**
Andrew: That's the best part of punk shows—it's direct contact with people. Because in a lot of the world people are not doing anything real. It's like you say—we have too much communication, but really we don't have enough because that is not real direct communication, it's fake. So really that is what is really lacking, real communication.
Scott: It's like you can text all your friends all over the world but you have no idea how to talk to the person standing right next to you.

**MRR: One good point I have heard about MySpace and other ways to stay on top of hardcore on the net was from Vasko, the singer of FPO and now SmartXbomb who loves that shit because he lives in Macedonia and he can't leave and he can't call me and we only got to spend two days of our lives together and that's it. So things like MySpace keep us connected. It's just sad because Americans can't handle anything, we have to take everything over the top.**
Scott: It's the same way we drink and do drugs and everything like that. Americans want to do the most they can possibly do and a little more on top of that. Nothing I have ever sent in a text has ever got anything done. It's all bullshit, it means nothing, it's all fake, it's not real.

**MRR: So one of the best things about this band is how you guys are all over 30 and Andrew is way past that, but you're still into it, you still feel it in your bones and that rules. So what are some of the bands you are digging on these days?**
Scott: I am a super hardcore nerd and with the net these days, I can look at fifteen record labels in twenty minutes and every new record I feel I need to obtain right away. I am always into new

stuff and new bands coming out. One band is a band called PMRC—they are from Texas and did one 7", but nobody got into them at all. That is why a lot of things have moved to small pressings—people are just not moving records like they used to. Then I get nerdier and need the records even more.

Andrew: Scott has really got me into a lot of new hardcore like Total Fury and I am really stoked we have so many good local bands in this area like Shattered Badge, who I really hope keeps playing; also Positive Noise is another great local act... international bands like Piazza Dropout and Anti-You. Since I came from the start of it all, I still love bands that have that short, fast and loud sound.

**MRR: Speaking of limited pressings, it seems like if you read the pages of MRR the big talk is all about all the limited pressings of records. Like I just read about the '90s and how the entire "pay no more than" idea started popping up on records and the records had bigger pressings and more info inside. Then now we have to keep the pressings low because who is going to buy them? But if you think about 1000 Bunny Skulls records, that's nothing when you think that we have a cabillion punk rockers in the world so why the fuck can't we sell them 1000 of your records? But the shit gets old so fast so before you know it the record is yesterday's news.**

Scott: Yes, we do have a million punks in the world, but every one of those fuckers are in bands and they are worried about their band and that's it.

Andrew: We also don't care about format, we just give our shit away on anything at shows or on the net, whatever. We don't care, we just want kids to hear this shit, that's it.

Scott: Downloading has also killed the chances of selling a lot of records. The reason is that people hear about shit so fast that they move on even faster to another new band or record. So the idea of selling a record over an extended period of time is not as likely. As far as Bunny Skulls goes, a pressing of 300 is pretty logical because we can't tour.

**MRR: You mentioned before that every fucker is in a band and I can't agree more. My band Positive Noise likes to play with Bunny Skulls because at least there will be us into what's going on. When I talk to you guys, we are not just talking about our bands, we are talking about new bands and other bands. It seems like when I go on tour now, so many bands just sit outside and nobody cares about other bands because they are so tied up into their own bands. It's like they figured out to play a hardcore song and that's it, there's nothing behind the music.**

Andrew: We just don't give a shit if you like us or not. We don't give a shit about anything, we just play.

Scott: Like, if you look at each of our EPs, I made stupid limited packaging for each one for just a certain number. For the first one I made a metal cover with a three-color stencil on that one, and for the second, I made a package out of wallpaper. I didn't do this for eBay, I did this for myself because I like making cool shit. It reminds of those early Lengua Armada releases when Martin was doing something on a paper towel because he wanted to have something he was involved in.

**MRR: Lengua Armada was one of the best labels that has ever existed, because he just did this shit and it seemed he did like you said—a labor of love, nothing more. I do the same with records I have put out because you want a piece of you in the record.**

Andrew: You know the labels that do that shit just to make them rare. I am not going to name names, but you know who they are. They create that fanboy shit.

Scott: You know, the fuckers who come to shows just to buy the record from the band who is playing just to put it up on eBay in the morning.

**MRR: I have seen it so much with kids in the past couple years coming to shows and just buying the record from the cool band while they play and never really feeling the intensity of the music, just wanting to be seen at the show. They felt if they didn't have that record, they're just a fucking moron, behind the times.**

Andrew: And that's one thing that's nice about the West Michigan/Grand Rapids scene is that it is small enough that you don't get that kind of bullshit, it's just a social scene of friends playing shows together. It's like, if you are getting preorders for 300 records then fuck, step up the pressing. Why not?

**MRR: Because then it would not be cool anymore—it's that simple.**

Scott: It's like the band Negative SS—they are a killer band but have records that have a pressing of 60. At that point you are like, "who the fuck are they trying to get the records out to?"

**MRR: OK, let's wrap it up—any last things you may want to say about punk or anything?**

Andrew: I like to play fast.

Jim-Bob: One thing about this entire scene is that I played in bands since I was 16 and this is the best thing for me. The friendships I have made and it all just seems so real.

Scott: When you play some bar and like ten people are looking at you all drunk, they also just want to get laid so why the fuck are you even playing?

**MRR: And they only have till 2:00 A.M. in most states to do so, some only until midnight.**

Andrew: It's not about the numbers at a show, it about how radical they really are.

www.myspace.com/bunnyskullsband

# HIGH CASTLE

Lawson

Hailing from different corners of the noisier spectrum of Southern California bands (Child Pornography, Duchesses, Woman's Worth, Work, Hips, and Saboteurs), High Castle produce a viscous byproduct of the jams you grew up on dragged through a record collection's worth of sludge and muck. Once you decide to bring it, that's kinda the only way to go. Songs about garbage strikes, astral projection, lonely security guards, hedonism, dropping out, meditation, injustice, misplaced hearts...and more. While based in the Bay Area, their sound somehow brings to mind the muscular post hardcore sludge of the early '90s, dragging their Southern Californian pasts thru a landscape of Midwestern dirge that's extremely compelling, especially live...

**Interview by George Chen**

**MRR: Have you now or ever ridden a fixed gear bike?**

Erin: Ha, yeah. I got bit with that bug for a couple of years when I lived in Frisco. Everyone says it doesn't make sense because of the hills, but it's good for the short and sprinty rides that happen there. I always had this complex cuz most people that ride fixed gear have this whole fashion style that goes along. Kinda dip-shitty and alienating as far as I'm concerned. When I moved to Oakland, I flipped the hub. The longer rides made me wanna have the option of being chill here and there.

Shaggy: Always thought in some way it would be another way to hurt myself, so I never touched it. I like to cruise and chill. Riding a fixed gear always looked like too much work. Shit, I have a car now I don't even ride my bike anymore, kinda sad really.

Wilson: Naw I haven't, but people do get jammin' on those things for sure. In reference to our song title, it was more just an observation on how watching people do tricks on fixed gear bikes was akin to watching someone do a rollerblading trick, you know, kinda wince-inducing. Coming from a skateboarding background, the pirouettes around the lamp posts and the vaguely equestrian maneuvers I see the bike dudes doing in front of my work just seemed like an updated version of roller kids jumping off curbs and doing ankle grabs, except with cooler clothes. Whatever, fun is fun.

Erin: Oh yeah I keep forgetting that's the title of a song. Isn't that one still called "Old New"? We gotta change that titling system—so many combinations of words and the word new.

**MRR: Boring question about how the band started.**

Erin: Is this a question? We were friends that had the same desires.

Shaggy: It's boring how we started. I actually don't remember. But I remember really liking Wilson cause he's a shit talker like myself, and we partied on a tour our past bands went on. I always thought Erin was a weirdo, then I hated him, and now I know him really well and kinda love the guy, even if we don't get each other's jokes. I like to think of our exodus out of the city as our real start. We are a bit of a different band and I think we get along better. I'm way excited about our new songs.

Wilson: As friends, I think we all just really wanted to play in a band together. And one that wrote actual songs, nothing improve- or noise-based, as we had been doing individually for a bit up until that point. We shared a common idea on how we would approach this kind of thing, given how our musical paths crossed directly or indirectly by our Southern California roots, playing and attending shows at the Che and the Smell, etc. and knowing what bands we all enjoyed from those days.

**MRR: I haven't read the Philip K. Dick book, but how does the name relate to Man in the High Castle? Or does it?**

Erin: Yeah, I used to order his books for this bookstore I worked for so I could steal them. I liked using that one because it deals with alternate/alternate/alternate histories. And we're three people with three backgrounds dealing with words and sounds that is supposedly coming across as this unified thing. Maybe the name deals with the medium of the band falsifying each of our individual experiences.

Shaggy: We are holed up in a fortified bubble, waiting for the Apocalypse. That's how I felt at the time when I lived in the city, so I thought the name fit well. We live in the East Bay now. To me it feels like home. At first, you don't want to go home, but when you do, it feels good. I hope we aren't making this sound like we planned this out and our band name has some crazy deeper meaning. It's mostly surface, we just all dug sci-fi and Dick, Erin likes Dick more than me and Wilson though. We could have been called Mongolords or Cunt Blaze or something way worse than High Castle.

Erin: Now I've come to realize that Dick is a pretty horrible writer. Kinda lumbering but he was full of great ideas.

Wilson: When we first started, there was a strong sci-fi slant to how we wanted to approach our lyrics and artwork. This may have been centered more on a common love for Art Bell than PKD, but considering the SF connection to the book, it seemed perfect. Plus I love that novel. We are

thinking of changing it to "High Assholes" though, as that seems more appropriate these days.

**MRR: But what other science fiction authors are influences, and does that extend to fantasy fiction? Castles can imply princesses and dragons too.**

Shaggy: Comics. Maybe we can write a song about the Witch King of Angmar. Just kidding.

Erin: I don't read as much sci-fi as I would like. I like Stanislaw Lem but wouldn't call him an influence. I can imagine anybody in any form of media that I like having an effect on me. I heard this Ellington song the other day that I can imagine ripping off to come up with a guitar part for the band.

Wilson: No fantasy fiction for me, wizards ain't shit. Does Bloom County count as sci-fi?

**MRR: What are the new songs about? The ones that aren't on a record yet? I appreciate that you include lyric sheets.**

Erin: There are two that we recently recorded that haven't been released yet. Hopefully out on a 7" soon with Stress Ape. One song is about second guessing DIY "culture." The other we used the Swamp Thing comics as a backdrop to the words. Two others are only half written. On our last trip to LA, I figured out I have to rewrite some words to go more along with Wilson's. That one where we all start singing together... fake harmonies.

Shaggy: I have some goals in life. One of them is to harmonize. We're working on it. The titles of the songs are prematurely scribbled on the set list as New New Song, Swamp Thing (please say it like you have a blunt in your mouth, looking at a golden sunset), but we will have proper titles soon. We write the music first, then after we settle in, the lyrics come, or are last minute right before we record and then we pick a name real quick, unless its one of those songs that magically comes full circle within moments of conception. We've had a few of those.

Wilson: Because of how we tend to write lyrics very individually, you will most likely always get three different answers to this question, so as of right now I don't know what the new ones are totally about. This reveals itself much later in my eyes, after I've fully absorbed and pieced together a narrative of sorts with what all three of us have come up with. Having a lyric sheet was something we all felt pretty strongly about, as I know we all have fond memories of being kids and pouring over a band's lyrics. Though due to our different writing styles, ours may be a bit of a difficult read. I tend to approach my lyrics for High Castle like a rough sketch of a short piece of fiction, where the music that was written beforehand serves as the backdrop for a story that reveals itself piece by piece the longer we work on it. The idea of having characters, plots and subplots contained within such a short frame of time is a very exciting and challenging prospect and I would like for the story to be able to stand on it's own outside of the music if I needed it to.

**MRR: Erin's lyrics tend to be much more abstract and touch a lot on personal politics, while Shaggy is very personal and earnest with her words and is a romantic at heart.**

Erin: It's funny because we all wanted to start this band because there seemed to be not many song-oriented bands amongst our peers, but the most difficult thing is the lyrics. At what point can you just let go? I suppose maybe for us it may be a difficult thing to do because there is no leader in the band despite there being phases where Wilson sings more or phases where I sing more. We all write the lyrics, in our own zone but with the whole baggage of editing because you may be wondering what the other members will be thinking about them; after all, the author may not end up singing them. I feel the words come together better when we choose a theme. They are more cohesive and less Nevermind-like. This happened with songs we recorded for the 7".

**MRR: I guess I was thinking specifically of the "Innocence" song, since you all sing it and I can't make out what comes afterward. And the even newer ones have these odd beats that repeat. I think of your stuff in terms of modular structures for riffs. Riff Legos or something.**

Erin: The "Innocence" song is the thing I was talking about earlier. We were sharing words in the car and I realized that my words were total bullshit. Gotta do another draft. Mostly I would say it's an odd love song. As far as the structure goes, we didn't repeat parts so much so in the past. We're going through this phase now where we're repeating a part here and there. I mean we listen to songs that

have v/c/v/b/c/v/ structure, so why not write a batch of songs that somewhat resemble that? Now that I'm thinking of it, it seems like we focus on repeating transitional moments more. We build on what Shaggy is doing and I feel that is really important. Sometimes Wilson and I completely ignore each other as far as notes. There will be a moment while writing when one of us ask "What notes are you playing?" and then it turns into something like "Yeah I think I'm playing that one somewhere in this part." I think we both take turns with playing guitar and bass even though we're both committed to our chosen instrument. We're scared of natural flow, the easy going natural transition. Which probably why we take a while to write songs. One song is usually made from three or four, which would explain the modular effect.

**MRR: What musical projects have you been a part of? Prior to this and continuing forth.**
Erin: Whoof, that's long. I'll stick with the present. I'm in Child Pornography. Just started this band Sister Fucker with my friend Vanessa and I am in Work with Sarah.
Wilson: Switch Bitch, Duchesses, Glen Branca's Hallucination City, Woman's Worth, Courtesy Flush, Black Pearl Stepchild, Lemon Bear (on occasion), lots of improvised music combos and gnarly rips is the future jam.
Erin: Shaggy was in Hips and is maybe still in Saboteurs.
Shaggy: I've been learning how to play guitar and have a handful of songs that I've been trying to record. Way sappy, about heartache and depression. Pretty typical love songs. I've been reluctant to play them live. It's a big step for me. I can disappear into the drums and feel totally detached from everyone, like they aren't there. But playing guitar and singing all alone in front of people, spilling out my guts and getting way too personal, it's scary. It's hard to let your guard down. Keep an eye out for Sunny Reaper.

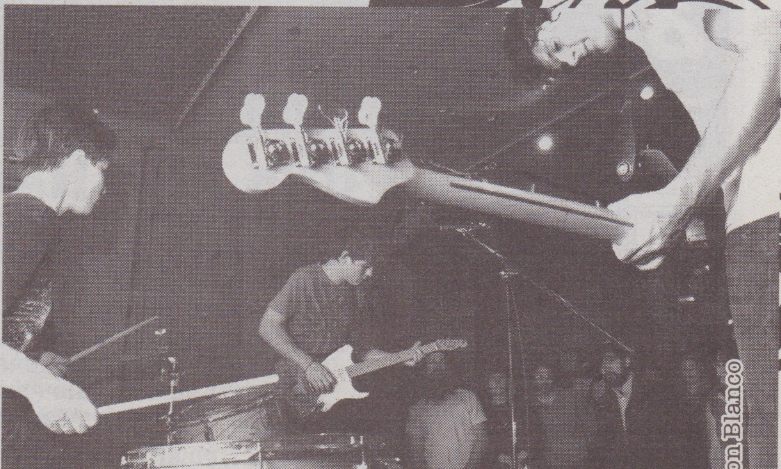
**MRR: How has living in the Bay Area affected your music?**
Erin: I think living in the Bay Area, you can really get a sense for how stagnant or lively the underground music shindig is because a lot of acts come through. It's a destination area on most tours and shows are easy to get to. You absorb a lot of the shitty and a lot of the amazing here.
Wilson: I just think being inundated with the strong noise and improv stuff that was going on for the first few years I lived here eventually gave me a desire to do something different than what was happening directly within our peer circle. Not like there aren't a million guitar/bass/drum bands already in the Bay (and everywhere else). It's just that we didn't, and still kinda don't, have much to do with them.
Erin: We also get alot of freaks from the Midwest and the South here. Which I think is totally beneficial.

**MRR: Do you have any pre- or post-show food, indulgence, or ritual? Good tour stories?**
Shaggy: I usually have to shit.
Wilson: And when she doesn't that means giving herself a pre-show enema on the bathroom floor of some crap bar in Pittsburgh. At least we ate buffalo wings that night. Keeping with the theme, on tour in Detroit, I saw a dog shit out an entire unfurled cassette tape on the living room floor at like six in the morning. I used some old newspaper to pick it up and throw it in a bucket I found in the hallway. The bucket was full of the piss of some girl who had taken too much acid the night before. Pretty sure all the toilets in the house were working.
Erin: Seeing the half demolished Tiger Stadium in Detroit will always stay in my head. That always pops up. Pittsburgh was definitely weird vibes after the show. Wilson got freaked out because he thought a rat ran over him. It probably happened too. I'm usually an early riser on tour, so it was pretty awesome that we all agreed to get the fuck out and on to the next town. Not that Pittsburgh is bad. Just, you know, it was one of those dates.

**MRR: What is the strangest thing someone has said to your face about your music?**
Shaggy: You are the best girl drummer I have ever seen.
Wilson: Ditto.
Erin: Shaggy is the popular one.
Shaggy: Maybe it's cause I have a strange name. We should all have odd names. Wilson should change his name to Sqwiggly. And Erin, from this point on, should be called Al Dente.
Wilson: Our friend Joe has tagged them the "Shaggarazzi".
Shaggy: That bastard. It's all very strange to me. I guess I should just roll with it.

**MRR: What do you want written on your epitaph?**
Shaggy: I'd rather not have an epitaph. Or a tombstone. I want to be burned atop a spire like a wizard. That's it.
Wilson: Directions to the El Novillo taco truck in Fruitvale. Though El Gordo might be making a run for epitaph worthiness as of late.
Erin: If I don't get my left pinky toe cryogenically frozen, mine should say "Sometimes this guy did stuff," ellipse and all.

**MRR: What band did you want to be in when you were fifteen?**
Shaggy: Wu-Tang Clan
Wilson: This was '96, so probably Screeching Weasel or F.Y.P.
Erin: Nirvana or Sepultura ("Schizophrenia" through "Arise" era). Or maybe the Cranberries. I didn't hear punk or hip hop or anything a million other people were already into until later on.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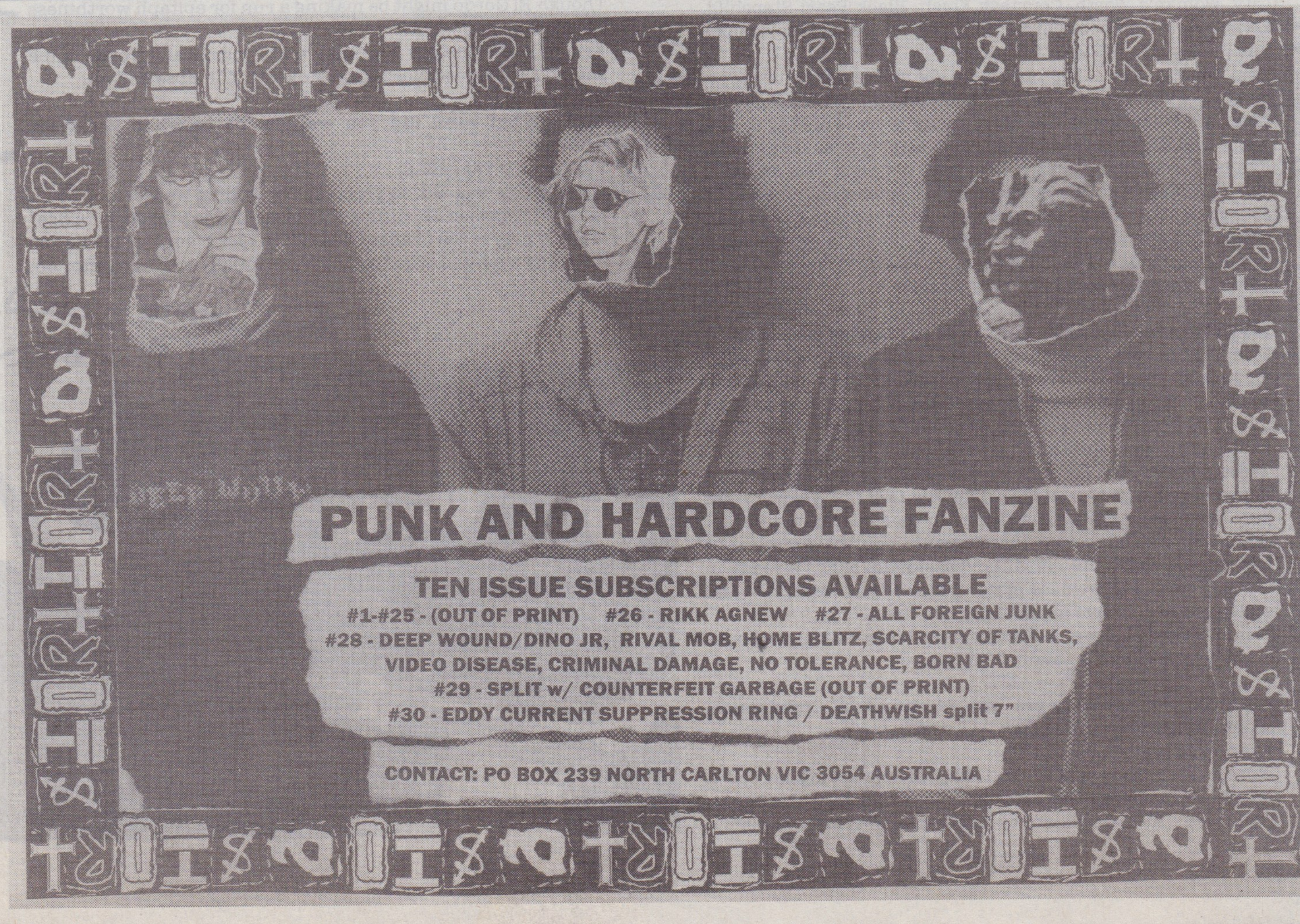
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# CIRCLE PIT

*I've known Jack and Angie since they were fresh-faced teens touring America with their old band Kiosk. Now they call themselves Circle Pit and continue to play music that blows my mind. I was hanging around Sydney and figured I'd talk to them about what's new.*

*Interview by Marissa Magic*

*Photos by Pedro Ramos*

**MRR: You should introduce yourselves.**

Angie: I'm Angie.

Jack: I'm Jack Mannix and I play guitar and sing.

Angie: I play guitar and sing too.

Jack: And we both play lead.

Angie: I was born in 1986.

Jack: Angie plays the main lead guitar; she does all the wah wah.

Angie: And I'm very romantic.

Jack: I was born on November 24, 1988, and Angie was born on the 7th of March 1986.

Angie: And I'm a Piscean and Jack is a Piscean rising.

Jack: Sagittarian.

Angie: With a Piscean rising.

Jack: Angie is my soul mate.

Angie: And Jack is my soul mate.

Jack: But I'm gay so unfortunately there's this complication.

**MRR: When did Circle Pit start?**

Angie: I have no idea, I have no long-term memory.

Jack: September 2007. Or maybe 2008…

Angie: I don't know, I think it was summer?

Jack: What do you think, Nic?

Nic: Well, it was…

Jack: Late one year. Our first show was a show with Garbage and the Flowers. It was the first show I got to play with this guitar that I had saved up a lot of money for. I spent $1,500 on buying it and restoring it to my tastes and I got to play one show with Circle Pit with it. There were about 40 people at the show and I was really wasted and I lost it and we had to catch a plane at like 5am and I just didn't know where my guitar was and we had to go.

**MRR: That's so sad.**

Angie: It was sad.

Jack: That was the worst tour of our lives because at that point our drummer was a real crazy man.

Angie: Yeah, I had to bash him off, and I'm not a violent girl.

Nic: That first show I played guest bongos and I woke up somewhere in the Blue Mountains with an expensive camera tied to my leg that I'd borrowed from university and spew all over my pants and I lost the sole of my shoe so it must have been a good show.

Jack: This is Nic Warnock from Circle Pit. Well, sort of.

Angie: He's not gay.

Jack: Nic moved to Sydney from Cairns and became our friend through our old band Kiosk and he eventually joined Circle Pit and he's since not been in Circle Pit.

Angie: He's a silent member.

Jack: The whole lineup is pretty loose except for me and Angie. We're the soul of the band.

Angie: Heart.

**MRR: I met you when you were in Kiosk too.**

Jack: And you lived in Olympia.

Angie: I remember it was six of the six, '06.

**MRR: Yeah, 666, and I covered the basement in all those streamers.**

Jack: Yeah, so I think Circle Pit started in late '07, because then I did a Circle Pit solo kind of tour of America in '08 with my ex-boyfriend Alex who goes by Always.

Angie: Well, for ages it was just a private thing in our rooms.

Jack: It was quite a while before we started playing live, we wrote most of our songs before we played live.

Angie: We still don't play live that much.

Jack: Our last band was really communal and spontaneous. This band is more of a bedroom project we worked on a lot before presenting it to the public. It encompasses our whole lives it's not just a band.

**MRR: So the first Circle Pit shows were part of a tour?**

Jack: We played this warehouse around the corner, then we caught a plane to Melbourne and played a couple shows there. And not long after that I went to America on my own as Circle Pit.

Angie: I reckon I'd be mad if you did a solo album.

**MRR: You could do that thing that Kiss did.**

Angie: We should do that.

Jack: Yeah but after *Wassup*, which is our

next album.

**MRR: I want you to talk about the difference between touring here and touring the states.**

Angie: Well, Australia everybody knows...

Jack: It's massive.

Angie: If you do a tour there's no infrastructure, there's no middle, there's big bands and little bands and nothing in between.

Jack: In America there seems to be like this industry almost, this huge community of underground bands across the country who will kind of come together and help each other out with house shows and all of that. And then there's bigger indie labels like Sub Pop or whatever, where you still don't have to go to the major labels but things are pretty established. And then there's the way bigger bands. In Australia it's like you're either Kings of Leon or the smallest band ever. There's no infrastructure, we don't have any small towns, each city is twelve hours apart so if you want to go on tour it's not easy. There're only three places to play on the entire east coast.

Angie: Considering western settlement of Australia was only 200 years ago. We started being a westernized country... things have progressed incredibly fast.

Jack: Depressingly fast.

Angie: It would be a beautiful oasis paradise.

Jack: But then again we wouldn't be here.

Angie: I feel like what exists for punk in America is sort of starting here now. I feel like we're bridging that gap in a small way, I just went on a tour with my other band Straight Arrows through regional towns and it was pretty good.

Nic: Here everything is very do it yourself, there's no Revolver or things like that. All the distributors here don't accommodate for like a 7" on a small label.

Jack: You have to distribute it yourself.

**MRR: You have to call up record stores and stuff?**

Nic: Yeah, which is cool in a way because you build a relationship. I think Australian distributors don't accommodate for making an interesting record in the tradition of a punk single or vinyl or making stuff affordable. They just don't.

Jack: And I think that that does influence the way people make music in Australia too.

Angie: Oh, definitely.

Jack: And with us having been making music for a very long time in Australia and doing it different sorts of ways and starting out and having no idea what we were doing.

Angie: Well, Australia—across the world it's seen as this mysterious dangerous southern hemisphere place that people don't understand.

Jack: But it's just like everywhere else.

Angie: I think it's beautiful and I love it and it's very far away. If it was a five hour plane ride to the states it would be perfect. People are desperate to come here and live here. I feel so lucky to live here, there's such good healthcare, welfare.

Jack: I'm on the dole, I get paid by the government every fortnight to do nothing.

Angie: You get paid to go to school. If I go back to school I get $14,000 to study. I don't have to work.

Jack: If we get sick we can go to the hospital for free.

**MRR: Yeah, I was talking to Roberta about it and she was just like, "I don't understand a youth culture without the dole culture".**

Angie: Yeah, and that informs so much of the music here.

Jack: We have that freedom to never work if we don't want to; it's a system that's pretty easy to take advantage of. I mean, it's not easy, it's not enough money to really live that comfortably. It still means that I don't have to have a job and I can get by.

Angie: Hey, P.S., why the fuck doesn't America use the metric system?

Nic: I kind of like inches and feet.

**MRR: Tell me about the 7".**

Angie: Can we talk about the album too?

**MRR: Yeah, but start with the 7".**

Angie: Let me tell it!

Jack: OK.

Angie: I'm just joking.

Jack: Oh, OK, after I got back from America we wrote some more songs and we got a band together for the first time because before that we had only ever played shows with a drummer and the two of us.

Angie: Yeah, which I really like doing.

Jack: Then on my 19th birthday we threw this warehouse party, a metal-themed warehouse party, where it was our first show with a five piece band. Nic played bass and Owen from Straight Arrows was our drummer and this girl Amelia was doing back up vocals and tambourine. It was a really amazing night.

Angie: It was the night our current prime minister got elected to government.

Jack: He's such an asshole. Anyway,

Amelia left the band.

Nic: She wasn't the snakeskin though.

Jack: Oh, yeah, we have this character we call "snakeskin." Well, basically Harriet is snakeskin now, it's like the missing piece of the puzzle, the extra girl that's supposed to be in the band that we were trying to find for ages, but now Harriet plays guitar.

Angie: I really wanted there to be another girl.

Jack: Yeah so Amelia snakeskin left, Gary joined the band on bass, and Nic moved to moog. We did that for a while and that was kind of heavier, a bit more metal.

Angie: Yeah, very metal, it had a good sound.

Jack: It was during that era that we recorded our 7", even though on the A-side me and Angie did everything and on the B-side me and Angie do almost everything but Owen is drumming. So that was done in 2008, and Nic here released it on RIP Society. It was the first release for that label, and they've gone on to do really great things. Owen went overseas and it seemed like a good time to change things up a little. And we got these three guys together from another Sydney band to play guitar, bass and drums, which changed our sound a lot. It was a little less heavy and more kind of classic rock or something. And that's when we recorded our album and we recently got rid of all those guys because they kind of ruined our lives.

Angie: Just the one.

Jack: Actually we only got rid of one of them, it was just...the devil joined our band for like a year and almost killed us.

Angie: Then I just went to Europe and laid on the beach for two months.

Nic: I reckon that the change in the two bands...the sound was pretty dramatically different but there was the same kind of sentiment and personality shining through.

**MRR: Like when a band changes their sound a lot you can kind of see it coming?**

Nic: Nah, it was pretty abrupt.

Angie: But at the same time I feel like it was kind of a natural progression.

Jack: I'm kind of glad it happened because it opened our eyes a bit more, and made us mature a bit more in terms of our music, but kind of realize the different possibilities.

Angie: With both lineups, every lineup was executing the same songs through a different channel or whatever and I feel like each variation of each song is still something that hasn't been exhausted. I feel like the lineup that was more metal is a sound we could return to with different people or the same people some time in the future. If we kept the same group of people as our band that would never even be possible. Unless we tried to force something, whereas this is kind of, we chose the personalities and it kind of came naturally.

Nic: Do you guys think it was important to change the lineup? Like every lineup you've done it seems kind of subversive, and it felt like a very necessary thing to have this hard rocking, very proud leather clad kind of...it felt like a really important thing at the time because there was no one else kind of representing that. But if you kept doing that forever it would have been stale...like every change you've gone through seems kind of subversive, like something that's been missing.

Jack: I don't think that that's a conscious thing. We're not really trying to fill a void for anyone, but like you have a certain sound, after a while you get sick of it and people start to kind of pigeon hole you for that. And so you try and move away from it, and we tend to be pretty drastic in our changes but without losing the kind of soul and core of what we're about.

**MRR: Talk about the album.**

Angie: It was like the best and hardest couple of days.

Jack: We recorded it at the start of last year, so 2009 in January.

Angie: It was really hard but in a really amazing studio, the engineer was quite indifferent to us, which worked in our favor.

Jack: It was kind of a case where we had like two days in the studio. We kind of just told him what we wanted to sound like and he did what we told him because he clearly didn't really like us as a band.

Angie: I like that he didn't like us.

Jack: He likes us as people. He basically just did what we told him to and it didn't match his tastes at all. It gets annoying when people try to put their own spin on what you're trying to do when you don't want them to. So we did it in two days and it was at a pretty low point in our personal lives, most of it was live with just a little overdubbed vocals. Two of the songs are just me and Angie multi-tracking, most of it done in one take.

Angie: I think because of the nature of the 7", it's just us two essentially. It was quite challenging to get the vibe of each song playing each track separately. Jack would do the drum and bass and singing and then I would do the lead and singing. And so for the album to make things easier we had the band play with us but it became... to squash it in that time, band members getting stoned, band members turning up sleeping all day on the ground in the studio having to wake him up to play the songs. In the end we got down to the two of us. It was very hard.

**MRR: It'll be on Siltbreeze?**

Jack: Yeah, we just found out that they want to do the album in America, which is cool. We're going to come over to the states in June or July to play some shows.

Angie: And I really want to see a volcano.

**MRR: A volcano?**

Angie: Yeah, in Colorado.

Jack: There are heaps of bands in America at the moment that really excite me. I feel like this last decade has been really fucked culturally and there's been very little, like, really amazing stuff happening. So far this year has been a really hard year for me, I feel like culturally on a larger scale the world is moving in a good direction as far as music goes at least and there're all these bands in America that I feel this kindred kind of connection to, which I've not felt for a very long time. Like Kurt Vile, Blues Control, Psychedelic Horseshit, Pink Reason, RTX...bands that I really admire and adore and have been really lovely to us.

**MRR: Jack was telling me about an art show you did?**

Angie: Yeah, we did a collaborative show in 2008, in June/July we went down to Melbourne for a month or two. We made a few works, we're always making art.

Jack: Circle Pit is kind of an umbrella term for everything that me and Angie do together. Outside of the band we also make art together, kind of basically anything that we do together is Circle Pit. We have another exhibition coming up in April, even though we haven't really been around for a long time it's going to be kind of a retrospective.

Angie: We're publishing a book.

Jack: We're doing a book with the exhibition.

Angie: 200 copies.

Jack: Of just drawings, writings, fliers. One thing that we're interested in is writing, kind of creating our own history and creating our own thing in a language of ideas and themes and motifs within our music.

**MRR: It seems like you have a really specific aesthetic.**

Jack: Yeah, and that's something that's really important to us because it shows people what we are like. I feel like we try to create our own kind of language, to kind of create our own universe because this world is so fucked and I don't want to be here and if we can make something that's better and above reality and just kind of live this fantasy life.

**MRR: Like creating your own culture?**

Angie: Yeah, but that universe of fantasies has become my life, and now my whole life is like that.

Jack: Yeah, it's just about creating your own culture, just doing whatever it takes to make life bearable for you and your friends. You know, fuck society and just be outside of it. But yeah we're doing that exhibition, we're going to do a performance at the beginning that we're going to release on DVD, we're recording another album while we're in Melbourne and we're doing a couple 7"s with a few different labels this year so it'll be a productive year, hopefully.

**MRR: What're some exciting things about Sydney?**

Angie: Demitris Pizzeria.

Jack: Sydney is my home.

Angie: The people here is what makes Sydney, it's a beautiful city.

Jack: The city's pretty fucked.

Angie: No, I mean like the beaches, the parks, there're no cities in the world that I've been to that are as beautiful as Sydney. But it's like if you live in Australia, I want to live in the biggest city, if I'm living in the southern hemisphere I'm living in Sydney. There's an amazing community here, great people.

Jack: I think the most exciting thing about Sydney, with my life and the way that I live it and the people I surround myself with range from all sorts of people from all sorts of walks of life. I feel like that's something that's lacking in a lot of other cities, they seem a lot more separatist where Sydney feels more open to accepting everyone as just people.

Angie: People support each other, there's no really—a lot of people here are trying to make a living from what they are doing and not shamefully, whereas in other cities.

Jack: Like in Melbourne if you admitted to wanting to live off your music, not in a gross way, just in a way where you don't have to work some terrible job, people kind of turn their backs on you. I don't know, there's a lot less animosity and people just seem carefree. It's kind of like California in that way.

Angie: I feel a kinship between California and Sydney.

Nic: Sydney has that urgency, generally I don't think big Sydney, proper Sydney really cares about what's going on. Melbourne seems to. Eddy Current and My Disco play to thousands of people and that's cool, it's a really positive awesome thing for the whole of Australia to be into Eddy Current Suppression Ring. In Sydney you have to really want to do it to do it, it's not easy to play a show, there're not really any established venues.

Jack: Sydney is kind of a hard city to live in if you're like a street kid or musician or whatever. It's the most expensive city in Australia, there isn't much of an underground community here, and I think because of that it creates such extreme kinds of music here and such amazing different types of bands. Because you have to really want to do it to be able to do it, where in other places it's easier to find a place to play. The urgency of Sydney is kind of what is so special about it, like this weird desperation.

Nic: All the really good bands here come out of this place of necessity. Like Jack was saying before, Circle Pit was never about some void, everything comes from a place of dissatisfaction with what's going on. All the bands from Sydney—other places it's like, oh we've got this scene going, lets do that thing, whereas in Sydney all the good bands come out of this are doing what we need to do. Because really there're no institutions here, no long running bars, no legendary clubs or whatever. There's none of that kind of legacy.

Jack: There's no history or infrastructure or real large kind of...

Nic: There are no good bands of the Sydney rock and roll tradition or whatever; it's all new.

Jack: Which is exciting, there's never really been anything much before, well there has but—

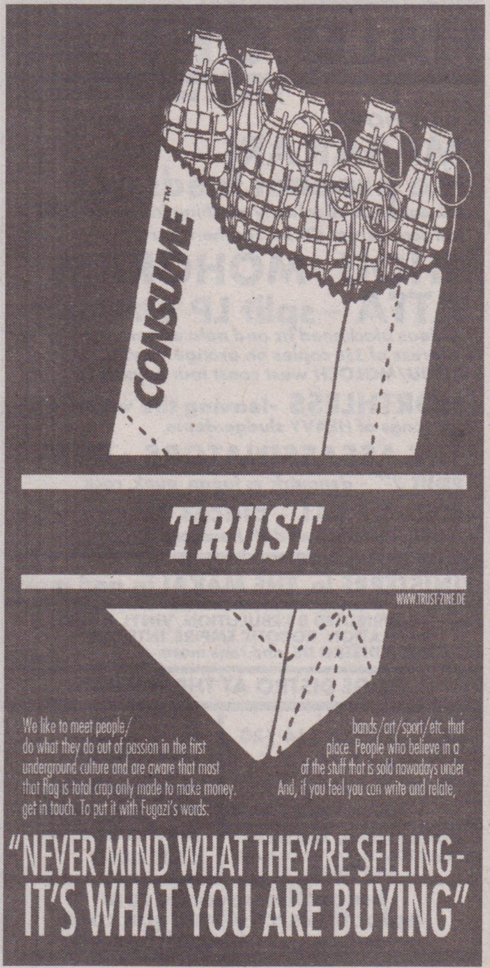
Nic: But it all comes...like the Slugfuckers or something, old Sydney bands kind of come from this real outsider thing.

Jack: It's kind of what unites Sydney bands.

Angie: The outsider thing.

Jack: Sydney can be a really lonely place, but because of that we all kind of band together and help each other out and that's the beautiful thing about Sydney.

Look for *Bruise Constellation*, Circle Pit's debut LP on Siltbreeze, this summer.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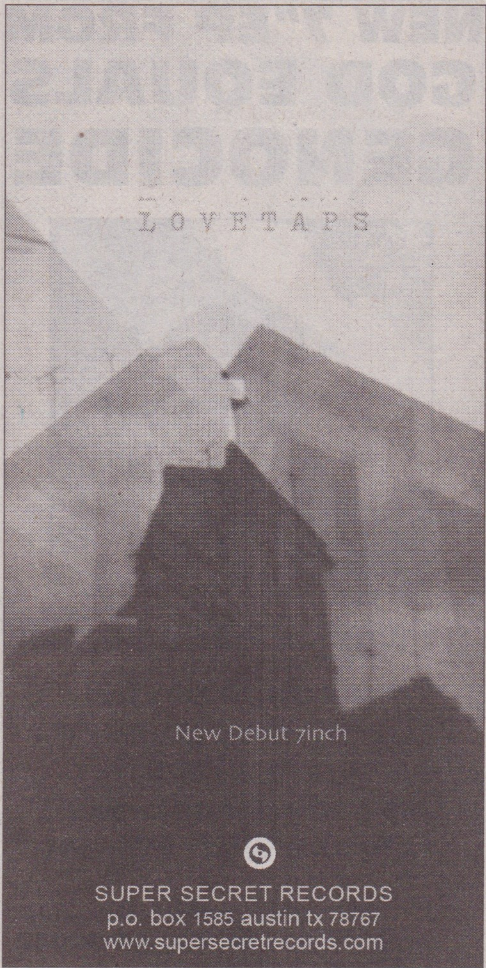
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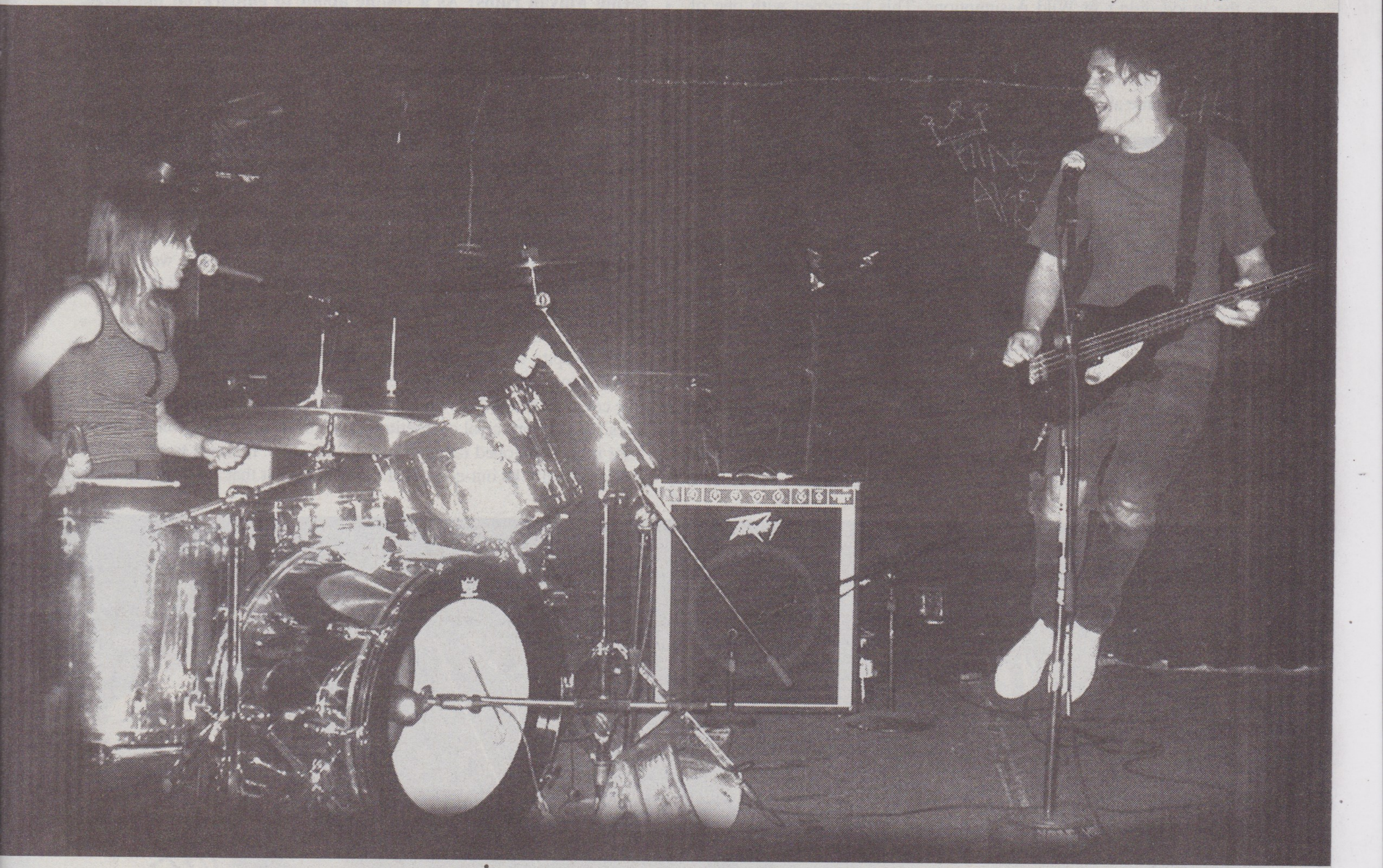
# STREET EATERS

***You may know John from his other bands, Fleshies and Triclops!, and Megan from Neverending Party, Before the Fall, and Master Volume. Together, they form the thriving duo Street Eaters. Street Eaters is one of those bands that are down to play anywhere—in fact, the first time I saw them was at the Albany Landfill for an informal wedding party, but they'll blow up any stage or house show. You wouldn't know it's just two people. The sound is huge and full, with back-and-forth vocals, and they keep it interesting and raw. The songs are catchy but dark, emotionally heavy at points but also direct and real. This is one of my favorite bands in the East Bay right now, and they are always writing new material and playing every chance they get! Watch out!***

*Interview by Julia Booze.*



**MRR: As far as I know, you've both sung in bands, with all the attention to yourselves. What's it like having to share the microphone (in the songwriting process or otherwise)?**

Megan: Sharing the mic adds to the struggle of playing music together, which is one of my favorite parts of the band. Maybe it's the struggle that makes the music interesting, but there is definitely no fascist dictatorship here—despite attempts on both sides. We write the songs together, sometimes writing off the other's part, or writing for the other to play, and I think this songwriting method comes from the fact that we share the mic. There are no silent partners, just loud and insistent.

John: I suppose the bands I am the most well known for have used me in the role of front-person, running around with a mic, playing all kinds of silly games with the fourth wall and generally making a spectacle of myself. It is one of the ways I have a good time and experience catharsis, and it probably makes me look like I am more in control of the musical process, in general, than I actually am. With Street Eaters, despite being physically constrained by a bass, I probably feel more freedom in a lot of ways than I do in my other bands. I write most of the bass parts and co-write the melodies, harmonies, and song structures with Megan. I only have one other person to get a yea or nay from—this greatly streamlines the songwriting process and assures that creative compromises are minimal. We also collaborate on the lyrics for nearly all the songs, which is pretty novel for me. I am used to writing a song's lyrics all by myself, or singing someone else's lyrics entirely. I have actually found this to be super rewarding and a great way to break writer's block, if your co-writer is like-minded with you. Learning how to do this in Street Eaters actually helped me to do the same thing without hesitation with Mattowar and Von on the new Fleshies record, too, and I think that record is definitely better for it.

**MRR: How do you know when something you write is for this band and not for one of the others?**

John: I generally write songs on bass and almost all the songwriting I do these days is for Street Eaters. I like being able to write something, get one other trusted collaborator's take on it, and have it become reality with very little creative compromise. At this point, if I am going to write songs or lyrics for my other bands, I go into it specifically writing a song for or with them. Street Eaters gets the bulk of new material because it is half me. If I am writing music just because I need to write, it'll almost definitely end up in this band.

Megan: There have been times when I wrote a song on guitar for Wild Assumptions, and it later became a Street Eaters song because the mood didn't fit Wild Assumptions. This happened with one of our newer songs we just recorded for a 7" this spring, "Ashby and Shattuck." I had shown John the main riff, and he wrote another part he could sing, I came up with some drum parts—and ta-dah! "Eating Worms" came about similarly.

**MRR: Your songs tend towards darkness. Do you think your art is a way to "deal" with awful things or bring more attention to them, or both?**

John: Definitely both. The ugly things in life need to have attention called to them if we are ever going to deal with them in a real way. I think Megan and I are both "eyes-wide-open" kind of people who want to talk about and understand the things other people prefer to sweep under the rug, be they political or intensely personal.

Megan: I've definitely grown less shy of my opinions in the past few years, and have found music to be a great way to express pain and anger. It might have to do with being a lady who's been playing music in front of punks since I was fourteen, post riot grrrl, and trying not to be any different then the dudes I was playing with. I'm starting to not really care so much anymore. Since John and I have to talk about our feelings to each other on a regular basis, it leaves little to hide with our opinions on politics, our friends, family, and each other. I know a lot of people talk about punk as being an outlet for oppression and pain, but I feel like it took me years to feel comfortable enough to publicly process hurt through music. I always played drums with my heart, and stood on kitchen tables and sang with my heart, but it was always some sort of outer-body experience. I should also mention that singing and drumming at the same time is one of the most empowering things I have ever done with my body. In a way, this physical act has helped me process darkness.

**MRR: "Useless Eyes" in my opinion is a perfect song. It appears to discuss the end of human life. Does this have anything to do with seeing Mayan ruins? As a couple about to embark on marriage, possibly procreation, tell me what you think about existing as punks getting older, or punks getting married, or punks being parents, with all the ugliness in the world.**

Megan: I came up with the idea for "Useless Eyes" when I was in one of my moods. John and I often fantasize about the end of the human race. His revolves around a great plague, and mine about the insects winning. "Useless Eyes" has a lot of starts and stops. It's very simplistic. The singing is somewhat cold and machine-like—kind of like roaches hiding in the cracks of buildings, just as they did billions of years ago in rocks, and watching us die off just as quietly as the dinosaurs. In a way, I don't think it's really an ugly thing. Just part of the world—how things that seem simple are in fact perfectly built to succeed.

John: Despite my plague fantasies, human life won't end quickly or anytime soon. It will eventually end. However, more resilient little things, like cockroaches, will live on in our place. Our predominant sense is our eyesight. Our principal competitors, such as insects, often function with a far more developed range of senses than ours. It seems to me that we will eventually be out-competed. Somehow, just that assurance of life's

continuity is comforting to me. It makes me want to sing "whoo-hoo!" if you know what I mean. Megan came up with the song idea and we both fleshed it out. Maybe my time in archaeology digging through the ruins of the ancient Maya, a past civilization that overextended their resources, has given me a certain sense of detachment when discussing the end of one world and the start of another. The roaches definitely rule the Maya ruins, at least when they aren't being eaten by the tarantulas.

As mentioned earlier though, I don't think human life will end quickly, or any time soon. Therefore, in the meantime, I will be living mine to the fullest—fully aware and without hesitation or regret. If that works out to include marriage and family, that is awesome. I grew up as the child of two awesome people, both dead now, who had a similar understanding of the world to my own. I'm grateful they shared it with me. People can live on beyond death through their ideas and values. Those can be taught to other people. My learned values state that we need to try and stay alive, aware and critical of the bad and dark things that are going on around us, and what end results these bad things may have if not acknowledged or addressed with some constructive solutions. This undertaking requires some hope. Hope is important. Having children can be one of many ways of expressing hope and communicating one's values and ideas beyond a single body. I grew up in an ugly world, but I see a lot of beauty in life along with the darkness. The whole picture is what makes it interesting. This kind of view may be somewhat dark, but it isn't nihilistic. I see no contradiction in raising children in an ugly world, especially if they are taught to recognize what is ugly and what is not.

Megan: With regard to procreating, I think that one of the problems with our society is that lame people are having kids, who they teach to be lame, and the numbers multiply. If punks, as well as other socially aware people became inspired to have kids, my hope is that there would be more generations of rad people doing rad things, making the world less ugly. I'm not sure if these two fantasies, the human race losing to cockroaches, or breeding an army of punks, really have much to do with each other, but there you have it.

**MRR: Let's get personal. How do you get your bass sound?**

John: Lots of power chords, rumbling open-string notes and overdrive. Equipment-wise, I really wanted to have a bass sound similar to what Von used to have in Freedom Club and Little Birds. He used a tiny old Fender tube amp from the '60s that was awesomely overdriven and dirty sounding, so the bass sounded like a mix between bass and guitar. Weirdly enough, I tried Megan's big, old '80s solid-state Peavey TNT 100 amp that her dad gave her when she was 14, and found out that it sounded almost exactly the same as Von's, only much louder. This was good, especially since I really didn't want to have to buy and care for a vintage tube amp. Bass-wise, I used to play a full-sized bass when I played in Harbinger a few years back and when Street Eaters started. Megan's other bandmate, Steve (bassist from Master Volume), knew that I needed a new bass and that I was a little guy so he offered to sell me this rad Gibson short-scale bass for dirt cheap. Short-scale basses are awesome for us hobbit-handed people, and this particular bass also has the distinction of a cheapo pickup that makes it sound extra overdriven and dirty. Let's say I was going for the opposite of the "nice, smooth, round bass tone" that "professionals" seek. I found my answer in the sadly overlooked bass gear of the 1980s.

**MRR: Let's get more personal. What was the conversation like when you were writing "Elephant in the Room"? Was it easy or hard for either of you to just say what you needed to lyrically, knowing what the exposure would feel like or not? Do you think anybody reads and understands what this song is actually about? Does it matter?**

Megan: When we wrote "Elephant in the Room," we thought we were on the verge of breaking up, both the band and with each other. I wasn't worried about if people would hear it, because, as far as I knew, they might not have. Also, I was very vocal with my friends about what happened, because I realized that a lot of them or their family had been in similar situations of domestic violence and assault. I wanted to break the silence so that I knew John and I weren't alone. It's really hard to not talk about something so big and ugly that dominates your thoughts, like an elephant in the room. By the time it was recorded and I was writing out lyric sheets for *We See Monsters*, it was a tender subject that we'd both gotten used to being public about from playing the song in front of people a hundred times. I have to admit that sometimes I truly hoped that people wouldn't ask us about it. I could just hear the song for the music instead of feeling the personal weight. It was a very dark time for us both, but we both worked very hard to get to the other side. I didn't expect there to be an other side though, and I think that part of me is still there sometimes. For us to get where we are, it took John to recognize and stop his addictions, and for me to realize I had a lot of elephants in my room hanging around and banging on the walls.

John: Assuming that most people reading this interview don't know what our song "Elephant in the Room" is about, it is a first-hand narrative of an incident of violent domestic abuse, written by and from the different perspectives of both people involved. This happened almost two years ago. Megan and I wrote the song about three weeks after the incident when we tentatively started hanging out again. I was blown away, not only by the disturbing realization that I was capable of such an awful thing, but by the fact that Megan would even consider allowing me back into her life against my expectations. It is well understood that "second chances" don't usually pan out very well statistically. Obviously I needed to change some serious things about myself to deserve that second chance and beat the statistics. This process was reflected in the song's lyrics. For my half of the song I talk about what happened and the awful thing I did that day, without flinching. Then the lyrics

look into the maelstrom of whirling bullshit spinning around—trying to analyze angry feelings and behavior; understanding where these came from; how to change the type of thinking that brought about the violence; and never doing anything like it again. It is a lifelong process and is not easy. The initial steps were made more manageable by becoming sober, getting some therapy, and listening to the advice of a good friend who had recently come to terms with related issues he had long-struggled with, all while sleeping in his closet for several weeks.

I feel that being open about something like this, acknowledging it publicly and in art, helps bring it out from the dark corners into which it is usually swept. There are serious stigmas associated with domestic violence—stigmas that stand in the way of people really getting the help they need to make changes and end the awful cycles associated with it, for everybody involved. Maybe by talking about violence openly we can take away some of that stigma and help people to better understand it, hopefully to stop it before it happens.

**MRR: Do you feel like your music is political or do you think all expression is political anyway?**

John: We definitely think actively and write about the politics of life, both personal and public, and how it affects our lives. Some of it is more explicit, like the songs "Blackwater" and "Nation Builder," which talk about aspects of the two wars we are fighting right now. Everyone else seems to be forgetting about them and how fucked-up that is. "Blackwater" deals with military contractors on the battlefield, committing horrible abuses and going under the public radar. They are mercenaries from the private sector rather than "ordinary" soldiers, with somewhat different motives, in theory, and less publicly accountable. "Nation Builder" is written from the perspective of a poor-person-turned-felon who can't get a regular job because of his criminal record. He joins the military, which allows convicts to sign up now. He discovers that the ghetto isn't much different from the battlefield—both have a damn good chance of killing him and those who sent him there would be fine with his death. These are just a couple of the directly political songs we have. "Running Dog" is another one, about the pathos of a front-line capitalist getting bailed out by "big government" that he claims to hate.

Personal songs can certainly be political as well, like "Elephant in the Room." I don't necessarily think all expression is political. Like, Kepi Ghoulie? NoBunny? Totally awesome, but not political. Well, maybe there's something political about NoBunny, but for the life of me I can't put my finger on what it is. If I could, I'd probably need to wash that finger afterwards.

Megan: I would think that political music hinges on delivery. A wild woman singing and hitting the shit out of the drums may seem extremely radical to some people, but I find it quite normal. For me to make my music political, I have to take it a step further. I'd like to sing about politics, while slicing my finger on my crash cymbal, smearing the blood on my cheeks like face paint, and giving you a what for if you're acting like a jerk, then singing sweetly about confronting monsters.

**MRR: You just put out your first record *We See Monsters* on Bakery Outlet Records. What do you mean by *We See Monsters*? What were your ideas behind the artwork?**

Megan: *We See Monsters* was our idea of trying to conquer the wild and unseen. Also, it's admitting that we're surrounded by things that scare us. This is our way of facing them. When I drew the cover, I used grotesque woodcuts of monsters and placed them in a sea storm. I drew with a sharpie and watercolors. I also did a series of posters for the record that I spray painted and silk-screened that were inspired from an etching on Greek pottery. The original image depicts a man fighting a half-man/half-serpent creature, but my version ended up looking more like a man and lady struggling. I'd intended them to be more androgynous. I guess it's pretty erotic and bizarre for punk art. We find beauty in the ugly and weird, which we felt was a good theme for the record. Right now we're continuing the wild nautical theme with our song "Frigid Digits" that we just recorded for a 7" split with our friends Severance Package that's coming out this summer on Dead Broke, Lost Cat, and Let's Pretend Records. We are also working on another 7" with Starcleaner Records this summer, with our first tender yet torn song, "Ashby and Shattuck."

**MRR: What kind of touring have you guys done, and what are your upcoming plans? How do you get around?**

John: We are a two-piece and are used to being right in each other's faces. We started out doing a few tours in Southern California and the Pacific Northwest in my old beat-up 1990 Toyota Corolla that got 30 MPG, packed to the gills with equipment. We also flew out to Florida two different times—once doing some shows with Triclops! around the No Idea Fest 2008 in Gainesville and then back again about eight months later to play a week of shows with Tubers and Vicious Fishes. Then, back again for a weekend at Fest 2009. The second go-round was in support of *We See Monsters*. We dragged St. Augustine's living legend Jacob Hamilton around with us the whole time. We adopted him as our official band boyfriend. That time, in addition to the shows, there was definitely some serious emphasis on inner-tubin', surfing (taught to us by Jacob), and fishing on the swampy banks of Florida while looking at the Roseate Spoonbills in the trees. It's only two of us and we want to do the same stuff. There is always going to be an element of vacation on the road that we might not get in when we're running around in bands with more members and different agendas.

In March 2010, we are going on tour from Ohio through the south, playing the Harvest of Hope Festival in St. Augustine, and then going over to Texas with our comrades Shellshag. When we get back to the Bay Area, we almost immediately go on tour with Tubers and Fleshies to Southern California. Then it's up to the Northwest with Tubers. Later in summer, we will be making our way to Missoula, Montana to play Total Fest. For these trips, and for the foreseeable future, we will be plying the roads in our new vehicle upgrade, a 1990 Toyota pick-up truck with vintage '80s wood-paneled camper shell, a two-person cab, 26 MPG; it never breaks down, and is gratuitously raised with ridiculous monster truck tires. It beats the hell out of a 14 PMG Econoline that breaks down and leaves you stranded every 500 miles.

Total side note: For all the times this band has been to Florida, and all the times I've been there in the past, I've never seen an alligator. At this point, I figure that when I finally run into one it'll be the last thing I see.

*Since the band doesn't know how to make their own webpage you can contact Street Eaters at the Facebook page (www.facebook.com/streeteaters) or listen to some songs/see tour dates at www.myspace.com/streeteaters. You can drop a line to either of these or send an email to streeteaters@gmail.com, though it is checked really infrequently.*

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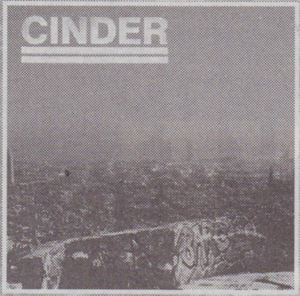


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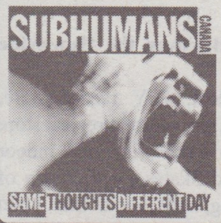


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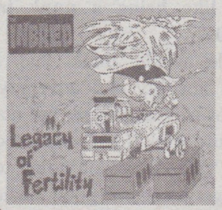


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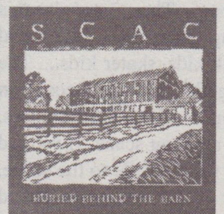


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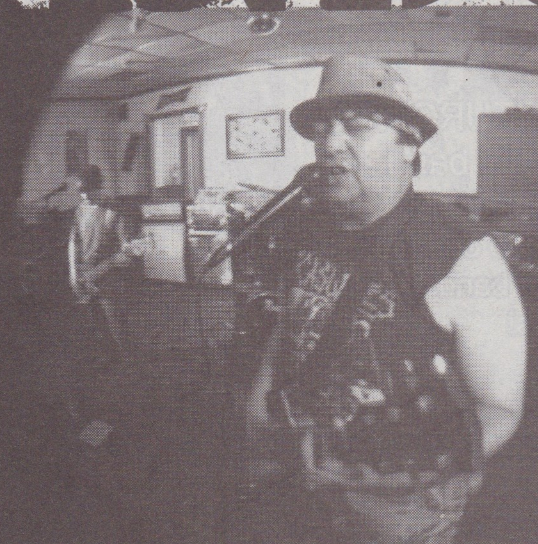
# RANDOM



# CONFLICT

*Bill Reeves (guitar/vocals) and Jerry "DJ" Lawrence (drums) formed Random Conflict in Huntsville, Alabama in the summer of 1988. The band's sound draws from early American hardcore bands like Black Flag, Minor Threat and the Circle Jerks, mixed with British punk from that era such as GBH, Discharge and the Exploited and some metal influences from the likes of Black Sabbath and Slayer. Even while undergoing several lineup changes during in the late '80s and early '90s, Random Conflict was an integral part of the vibrant mid-South underground music scene (Huntsville, Nashville, Atlanta and Birmingham). Following a violent fight between then bass player Rob Moore and drummer Ray York, Bill and the band called it quits in 1992. In 1996, Bill and DJ restarted Random Conflict with Brian Murphree on bass, and over the next fourteen years the trio released three full-length CDs and several other demos and split recordings and appeared on more than a dozen compilations. Since 1988 the band has played hundreds of shows with bands like Fugazi, the Exploited, the Casualties, Total Chaos, Anti-Heros, the Unseen, Antischism, Violent Society, Anti-Flag and many others.*
*Interview with Bill Reeves by David Baird*

**MRR: How did you first get into punk and hardcore?**
Being a young kid in the mid-'70s I was pretty disgusted, bored and enraged with everything that was around me and the general emptiness of '70s pop culture. But I would guess what got me to where I am now was picking up a *Hit Parader* magazine in the summer of 1976. Inside was a review of the Ramones' debut album. I was really intrigued by titles like "Beat on the Brat," "I Wanna Sniff Some Glue" and "Texas Chainsaw Massacre," and these guys looked like I looked at the time. So I thought, "this has got to be good." I found a copy of the album in a local record store, bought it and life was never the same. Actually, life wasn't the same after the first minute of the first song.

**MRR: What was it like being a punk in Alabama in the late '70s?**
[laughter] Most people would think that I probably met a lot of hostility and adversity. There was a little of that here and there, but not near as much as you would think. I had very good friends that would say, "When are you going to drop that punk shit and get into some good music like Styx, Kansas and Toto?" There was always the odd record store clerk that would say, "Dead Boys? What the hell is that? What the hell are you listening to?" I didn't have too many negative experiences.

**MRR: What got you into playing in bands?**
I grew up going to the arena shows, stuff like Kiss and Aerosmith. Punk kinda told me that maybe I could do this. I always wanted to be in a band. I could never emulate those arena rock bands, but punk gave me a place to start. I played with some good people, but I played some real crap for a long time. It wasn't until 1983 that I started playing in actual punk bands. I had a band called Suburban Nightmare with two girls who couldn't play. It was a total joke, kind of like the Germs in their early days. We would do crazy stuff like audition for telethons. We also played at a biker wedding reception. After that I went through a stage in the mid-'80s of playing in Top 40 cover bands, classic rock bar bands, heavy metal bands, hair bands and new wave type bands. Finally, in the summer of 1987, I stumbled upon what was the Huntsville punk and hardcore underground. About three months later, I was in my first real hardcore punk band called Miscarriage. After that band folded, I started Random Conflict in the summer of 1988.

**MRR: How did you discover the Huntsville hardcore punk scene?**
I was at an independent, DIY record store, Sunburst Records (RIP), the greatest record store ever. I noticed a flyer for a show at a local indoor skate park, Underground Skates for a couple of local bands: Monster Dog, and Coup d' État. I met a lot of really cool people there, saw some cool bands and I was hooked.

**MRR: What was the underground scene like in Alabama and the mid-South in the '80s and early '90s?**
Surprisingly very strong. There wasn't this tendency to divide along genre lines, like metal kids, hardcore kids, punk kids, skater kids.... The scene tended to band together, and we focused on our common ground as opposed to our differences. Because of that we had a strong scene. If we had trouble with people that were hostile to the scene, like jocks, rednecks or Nazis, everyone pulled together and had each other's back. Even if you didn't really know the person you were defending that well.

**MRR: How big was the scene back then?**

Generally, there were about 300 to 400 people—sometimes 500 people at some shows. This was pre-internet, pre-MySpace and pre-cell phones. Word of mouth and a few flyers in strategic places would bring out a crowd like that, because there weren't divisions along genres and subcultures and everyone supported everything. You would have a death metal band, a hardcore punk band and a ska band at the same show. There was some resistance here and there, but generally people were on the same page. The result was a stronger, bigger, more productive and more creative scene. It was a hell of a lot of fun. People should check out the scene archive website that you put together. www.myspace.com/peerpressureproductions19881995.

**MRR: What is your most memorable show from that time?**

There are so many, but off the top of my head I'd say when Fugazi first came to Huntsville in 1991 and we played with them in a ballroom at a hotel. That show was massive; there were probably 700 or 800 people there. Unfortunately, the fire marshal shut the show down after Fugazi had only played eight songs. That was the biggest show of that era. Another would be the infamous one we played at the Village Haven. This place was in a rural area outside of Huntsville called Toney. It was an all-ages music venue and arcade that a couple of locals had started for the kids in the area. At the end of our show we were trapped inside the place because it was surrounded by rednecks with shotguns. They were shooting at the building from across the street. There was no phone, so there was no way to call for help. Eventually they stopped shooting. We made a run for it, got in our cars and took off—I find it miraculous that we were able to do that, we weren't followed and no one got hurt. Later that night, the Village Haven was vandalized and covered with racist graffiti as well as graffiti insinuating that we were satanic. It was a serious situation. It even made the local newspapers. But we didn't back down. We went out the next week and played a benefit show for the people that ran the place. I thought they showed a lot of courage, because they grew up in that area, lived there and knew some of these people who had shot at us, and for them to stand up to those rednecks showed a lot of courage and integrity. This was an excellent example of how unified the scene was at this point, in 1989. People weren't scared to come to the show.

**MRR: Did you have a lot of trouble like that?**

It wasn't often that lives were threatened. There were a few fights here and there, but for the most part that stuff worked itself out. Violent attacks on people in the scene happened more frequently at places where we hung out, like the park in downtown Huntsville. We had a few former Huntsville scenesters get sucked into the whole white power, neo-Nazi, skinhead thing. Fights with skinheads didn't happen often, but they were a presence.

**MRR: So why did Random Conflict split up in 1992?**

We had people in the band that let their ego get ahead of the band. We started having personality clashes and clashes over direction. When we started out, we were more or less a straight hardcore punk band with some metal touches. But by the early '90s, I was having less and less of a hand in writing the music. I still wrote the lyrics, but we started to become more of a death metal kind of a band, which was fine for me at the time. Some in the band were putting their own personal glory ahead of the band's well being. That led to our bass player beating the living shit out of our drummer and putting him in the hospital. We could never find a replacement drummer, so the band called it quits in 1992. I played from mid-'93 to the spring of '96 with a pop punk band called Snapdragon that was made up of a lot of Huntsville scene veterans. In fact, the weekend of the last Snapdragon show was the same weekend of the first Random Conflict practice with our current lineup.

**MRR: What is the scene in Huntsville and North Alabama like now?**

I wish I could have a more positive attitude about it, but the truth is that it's at the lowest point that I've ever seen it. It has been very weak for about the last three years, primarily because we haven't had a real consistent venue. People have really split up into little cliques and factions that don't really interact with one another. People just don't support each other like they did. It's a weaker scene and not as much fun as it could be. There's also a real lack of bands, and the bands don't support each other like they should. People should support each other and get out of their cliques. Take off that damn iPod. Get off MySpace. Get to a show. If you see interesting people that you think you might have common ground with, don't be a stuck up snob. Go make them feel welcome to the scene. Many people in the scene have this attitude like, "Who are you? I don't know you, so I'm not going to talk to you." They shouldn't act like that. Don't divide up over silly things like how people look or what bands they are into. There's no good reason for those divisions. When the scene faces adversity, people don't pull together like they used to. As a result, we don't have a lot of good shows.

**MRR: How would you describe Random Conflict in 2010?**

This time around we've stuck to our origins. We've evolved a little; some of our songs are a little bit more sophisticated. But we are still a true hardcore punk band, maybe even a hardcore punk/metal crossover band.

**MRR: Where are some of the places you have played recently?**

You'll be really surprised at where you'll find good scenes. We have played in some of the most out of the way places, like Paducah, Kentucky; Columbia, Tennessee; Kingston Springs, Tennessee and Cullman, Alabama. These places have off-the-charts crazy scenes. There are several cities that are always good for us too, like Birmingham, Knoxville and Chattanooga. Without fail, we have great shows in those areas.

**MRR: You're going to be turning fifty years old in less than three years. What are your goals for Random Conflict before you reach fifty?**

Keep playing shows. Keep playing as hard, sincere and intense as I possibly can and beyond what I can. Keep putting out what I consider quality stuff. I want to keep having a fuck load of fun in the process. It could end tomorrow, or it could end fifteen years from now. I can't predict that. We've had the same lineup for fourteen years, and I hope to keep doing it with the same people. I don't plan on quitting anytime soon.

**MRR: When you go to a show now, there are kids there who are young enough to be your son or daughter. What is that like?**

As far as I know, none of them are my kids. [laughter] I love it. I am continually amazed at kids that aren't put off by the fact that we are old enough to be their parents. I've had some of them tell me that seeing someone at my point in life still doing this is really inspiring. I've had a few little snotty scenester kids say to me, "Why don't you quit and make room for other people?" I just ask them, "Are you implying that when you get past 30, you are just going to become another suburban housewife or a husband dullard? Is this just a little phase you're going through?" They usually shut up after that, and people that say stuff like that don't last long in the scene anyway. I don't think I'm a role model or anybody to pattern your life after. Don't be like me when you're 47; be like *you* when you are my age. Be who *you* are.

**MRR: Let's shift gears for a second and talk about politics and the state of the world.**

This nation has turned into a border-to-border dysfunctional family. Through various manipulations, the media, educational system, government, religion, entertainment, whatever, we have turned into a bunch of frightened sheep. I'm not really meaning to bad mouth the good people in this country, but there is so much divisiveness and selfishness now. And those qualities are treated like a virtue instead of viewed as something detrimental to the country, society and the human race. I'm 47 years old, and since the age of 17 I've been clean and sober. I try to make myself aware and keep an open mind, but I think we have turned

into a nation of frightened morons. And people seem willing to be like that. They are unwilling to question their own thoughts and values. They won't look beyond what they've been told. I think a big problem with American society is that people are slaves to tradition. Tradition has become a security blanket for weak-willed, scared people. Tradition can be a comfort zone, but it can also be a 500-pound weight on your back, a blindfold, a gag and ear plugs. People don't question anything anymore. They just write it off as, "Well, that's just they way it is. That's just tradition." Don't be a slave to tradition, because if traditions stand long enough, they become corrupt and evil. And yes, that applies to our beloved punk hardcore scene.

**MRR: You were laid off from your job about eight months ago. How has that affected your life and Random Conflict?**

It hasn't impacted the band, because we are fortunate that it more or less pays for itself, on-the-road expenses and things like that. But I will say we don't have as many people at shows or buying CDs as we've had in the past. However, getting laid off has definitely impacted my personal life. It's hard to go out to shows and travel to check out scenes in other towns when you have to watch every dollar for food and basic living expenses.

**MRR: Do you think the change from Bush to Obama is going to change the direction of the country?**

Nope. I think it will be more of the same, new boss same as the old boss. We're now in the 29th year of the Reagan administration. I'm not a partisan or major party guy. I think Barack Obama is going to be another George W. Bush just like Clinton was simply another George H. W. Bush. Major party politics are another way that people are played off against each other by the powers that be. I've got just as many gripes with the left as I do with the right. However, I think American society since the '80s has shifted so far to the right that anything moderately less than extreme right is viewed as far left.

**MRR: If you were in charge, what would you change?**

I think the orgy of privatization and deregulation that happened in the '80s really hurt this country. I would call for more oversight into the financial and corporate entities. I'm not going to make a blanket condemnation of business as a whole. I do understand that it has its place, as does law enforcement. I'm not going to be naive and utopian enough to think that there's not a need for some degree of law enforcement or a need for an armed forces. However, I don't think it is America's place to be the world's policeman and to go out on nation-building missions around the world where Wall Street and corporate America have got interests. I would support the troops in the best possible way. I would bring the troops home to defend our nation as opposed to having them as a strike force for multinational corporations.

**MRR: Earlier you said you've been clean and sober since you were seventeen years old. Would you describe yourself as straight edge, and if so, what does that mean today?**

Yes, I am straight edge, and yes, I've gotten back to where I X my hands for the first time in twenty years. There was a point where I denied the label straight edge, because it has splintered into quite a few different versions. I'm not sure I would qualify by the modern standards, because I am an occasional meat eater and there are other aspects of my life that might not meet some people's criteria. Bear in mind, straight edge as it stood originally, in what I think was its best version, was a lifestyle choice, not a social movement.

**MRR: What advice would you give someone who is starting his or her first band?**

Don't ever doubt yourself. Do what feels right. Screw anyone who tires to stop you or tells you that you're wrong. Dig into whatever you are passionate about and play as hard, as heavy and as balls to the wall as you possibly can. Always give 110%, even when you're playing to five people in your friend's basement or if you're playing to 2000 people. Treat every show with equal respect, because when you don't you disrespect your band, music, and your own abilities. I would also advise staying away from specific cultural and topical references in songs. You can date yourself too easily that way. Take, for instance, in the 1980s, you had some incredible songs about the Moral Majority, Reagan, the Falkland Islands and Nicaragua, things that needed to be said. However, unless the bands are willing to write changes into those songs, those songs remain trapped in their own time. They are great songs, but they don't have the same relevance they once did. If you address a topic in a song, stay away from specific times, dates, place and people, and your song will be relevant to more situations and have a longer life.

**MRR: What do you see as the future of how music will be created and consumed?**

Music means a lot to me, and I find the disposability of music today to be a disturbing trend. I know you can't stop progress, but to me there is no bigger thrill in the world than going into a record store and finding something cool and actually holding it in your hand. By letting it all go to downloads, people are missing out on a hell of a lot of fun. But on the positive side, discovery of new music is easier in the digital age.

**MRR: What are your five desert island albums?**

I almost don't want to answer this, because it could change next week. Black Sabbath *Vol. 4*, Minor Threat discography, Black Flag *First Four Years*, Circle Jerks *Group Sex* and Slayer *Reign in Blood*.

Discography
1988 *Defying the Megadred* demo (self-released)
1990 *Psychotronic Mecca* demo (self-released)
1991 *Shadows of Existence* 7" (Peer Pressure Productions)
1992 *Internal Visions* CD/cassette (Peer Pressure Productions)
1996 *Blown Fuse* demo (self-released)
1997 split 7" with Anti-Crisis (Pun Crock Records)
1998 *When We Do Right No One Remembers, When We Do Wrong No One Forgets* demo (self-released)
1999 *New World Order* CD (self-released)
2004 "Southern Hardcore The Way It Is" three-way split CD with Skeptic? and The Bloody Sods (D-Fens Records)
2007 *Annihilation Generation* CD (early pressings as a split with U.S. Police State) (At A Risk Records)
2008 *Invisible City* CD (self-released)
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IRON LUNG/SHANK LP/CD-Audio Brutality
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SECOND OPINION - CD High Energy thrash
BARBARIC THRASH CD COMPS:Euro,CaliComps
CRUCIAL SECTION-LP: 80s RIPCORD-thrash
SHANK-LP/CD: 1000mph power violence
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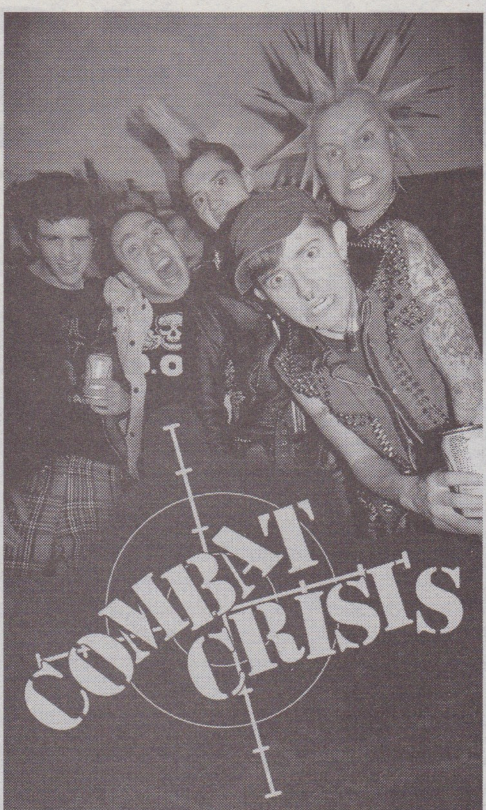


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# MEHKAGO NT

*Traumatic, devastating, bludgeoning sound. Mehkago NT is a spectacle live—you can't help but watch what the fuck is making you want to get so rowdy. The first time I saw Rick Smith hitting the drums harder than I'd ever seen before, Dub jumping off of a PA speaker and screaming at unbelievable volume while backed by oppressively heavy guitars, I could only be floored. Mehkago NT is like that—you can let it roll over you or allow it to get in your blood. The hate emanating from this music is palpable and contagious—it transfers from your ears to veins within seconds. Sweltering in Miami and listening to years of spiteful music, some people got together and channeled rage into a wave of blistering, heavy noise that is impossible to ignore. Mehkago NT—"I will shit on you"—is:*
*Dub-Vocals, Berny-Guitar, Miller-Guitar, Chris-Drums, Harold-Guitar, Bundy-Bass.*
*Interview by John Fahy.Photos by Zac Wolf.*

**MRR: How did this band come together? I know all of you had been in bands previously, tell me what bands you have been in and how it led to Mehkago NT getting together.**
Dub: Harold and I met at Churchill's. His other band DNME had just finished up their CD and it was playing, so I started talking to him about that band, and this was around the time my other band, Shitstorm, started. I told Harold to check it out, because from our conversation I knew he was into extreme music and was a diehard about it. It's always been hard to find people to create shit with in a place like Miami where everybody is so superficial, so it was nice to meet a likeminded individual. Harold checked out Shitstorm and at the time asked to play bass for us. We didn't want to complicate things, so we kept it as a three piece and Harold and I decided to start Mehkago NT along with our bass player Bundy, who came up with the name.
Harold: Since the mid '90s me and an old friend were trying to get a band like this going but couldn't find a drummer that was into the same shit we liked and could play fast as fuck! It was always a mission finding a drummer down here! Back then I was in OUT OF SPITE and DNME. Then around '06 Bundy and myself talked about doing some violent shit. So after about a year of looking we found a drummer and started the band. I knew Dub from going to Shitstorm shows and he was into the shit we were doing so he jumped on board and brought his boy Miller on second guitar! A few shows later shit wasn't working out with the drummer so Dub's brother Rick stepped in and the wrecking machine known as Mehkago NT busted the shit out!
Berny: I'm not going to answer this one. I wasn't there at the very beginning.

**MRR: Did you have an idea at the beginning of the direction the music would take? The band has a pretty unique sound, there seem to be hardcore, crust and metal influences in the songs, how does a song come together?**

Harold: It's basically a mix of all the shit I grew up on: Napalm Death, Celtic Frost, Extreme Noise Terror, old Thrash and old NYHC!
Dub: At first we had a drummer who was a solid player, but he wasn't on the same page as us. We played some shows with that drummer and my brother Rick who plays in Shitstorm with me saw us and decided he wanted to join. Once Rick joined I think we really developed our sound. Everything came together. We are all fans of extreme music and our influences just came out naturally into the band. We are all influenced by different types of music so I think it naturally shows in our sound. The first record was pretty much written and recorded all by Rick, Harold and me. Our other guitar player Miller wrote guitar for one song and co-wrote lyrics to "Holy Shit" with me. He also played some random solos on certain parts. Now we also have a third guitar player named Berny and a new drummer named Chris. Rick moved to Gainesville and plays with Torche so he couldn't really play with us anymore. Berny wrote some of the new songs and Chris added his style of drumming, which changed the band's sound up a bit.
Berny: Like I said, I wasn't there at the very beginning. I think the sound comes from the fact that we all love hardcore, crust and metal. When I used to go to Mehkago NT shows before I was in the band, you'd always notice a very

mixed crowd, and the music seemed to reach everyone that likes hardcore or grindcore or whatever. When we were writing for our new record, there weren't any rules to the process, no boundaries. Otherwise, I'd say it's pretty similar to how any band would put together a song. Someone will come in with an idea, and then we'll all work on it until it's perfected. The difference between us and any other band is that there is no musical confinement.

**MRR: Who takes care of all of the artwork?**
Dub: We all take part in creating the artwork, but I would have to say our old drummer Rick created most of it, including the self titled record, *Human Extinction* EP, and some shirts. Usually I was with Rick and we would both brainstorm and he would then put it together. Bundy, Harold and Miller have created a lot of the shirt designs and merch as well.

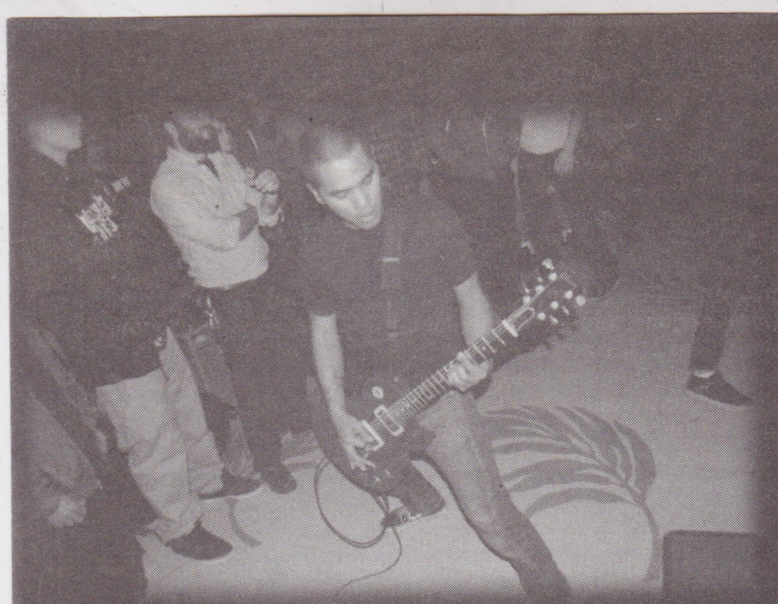
**MRR: Tell me about all of the releases you've done and what you have coming up.**
Harold: Five-song demo CD limited to one hundred hand-numbered copies. Self-titled CD through To Live a Lie Records. Self-titled LP with one bonus track also released on Makeshift Origami, SOY Records and Vinyl Rites. Three-song *Human Extinction* 7" through Abort the World, SOY Records and Vinyl Rites. Religious As Fuck / Mehkago NT split through No Idea Records, and an upcoming ten-song LP in 2010. The new record will also be released on tape.

**MRR: What tours have you done? Do you have any plans to tour currently?**
Harold: We have played all over Florida numerous times. We toured for a week starting in Florida and going all the way to Washington DC. Once this new record comes out we'll be doing an East Coast tour. It would be fresh to go to South America or Europe!
Berny: As far as I know we might go on tour in March or in the summer. No solid plans as of yet.

**MRR: The band has gone through some lineup changes, has that changed the sound of the new material?**
Harold: The new lineup is off the chain! We got Chris from Maldito on drums and Bernie from Hellmass on guitar! Hialeah! What they do! The new shit is more aggressive than the older stuff. The older songs were straight up crusty hardcore, the new shit has that plus some elements of shit we didn't do before. The slower parts are heavier and more grind. A lot of people consider Mehkago NT as a grind band but we didn't really have that many blast beats. The new shit is definitely not lacking in any of that, it's fun to play. Be it metal or hardcore, we fuse it into our own style. Don't deny your metal roots, motherfuckers!
Berny: Since I've joined the band we haven't done too much creatively. It's been mostly playing shows and doing fests and that one tour I mentioned earlier. When our new drummer Chris joined—after a slew of fill-ins—that's when the creative process was seemingly revitalized, and it was just a matter of time before we were in the studio. As far as the sound is concerned, I think it was bound to change anyway, we just happened to be there to see it happen! I'm very excited about our new record. We started recording it in late December. The music has taken a different direction. It's less about long and epic songs and has a lot more to do with straight up, old school grindcore / powerviolence /crust. So what I'm really saying is that we've trimmed the fat and have significantly sped up our music.

**MRR: How do you think the Miami hardcore scene has changed over the last few years?**
Harold: I think it has changed for the better. The kids are more open-minded and you can see that in the versatility of the bands—they all have their own flavor! What I am seeing now is that all the bands are just doing what they want to do, not trying to fit into anything. That's commendable! You should do whatever the fuck you want to do and that is what I am seeing with a lot bands from down here. I gotta say bands like Capsule, Eztorbo Social, Maldito, Gorilla Pussy, Shitstorm, Consular, Hellmass, Homestretch, Hardware Youth, No Class Action and a few others are doing some good shit!
Berny: In the past year, there has been a Miami revival. People are forming great bands, a lot of shows are being had, venues have came and went, but I feel like our scene is very strong right now. It's very reassuring to have great local shows every weekend. In 2010 this is especially true.

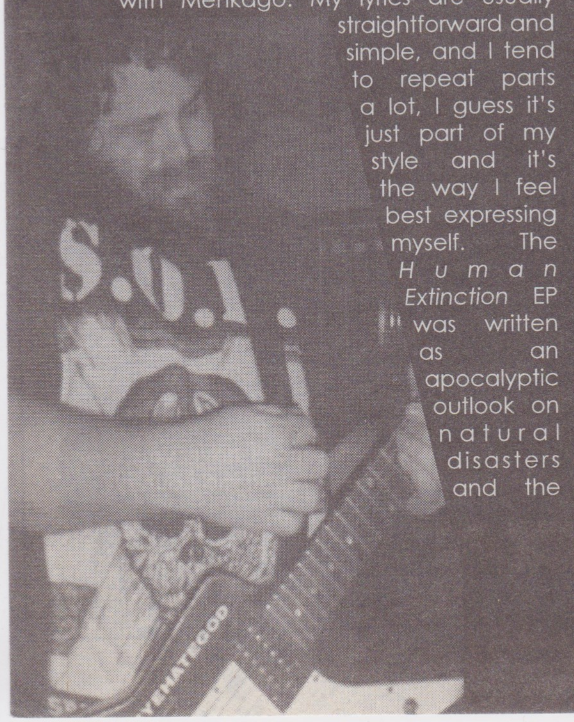
**MRR: Since you've toured, what differences have you seen between the Miami scene and others around the country?**
Harold: The



only difference that I see is that we are mostly Spanish down here, but I also see a lot of similarities, a lot of kids are there because they love this shit and their heart is in the right place, in other words diehards! Fuck all that bullshit posturing, it don't belong! Battery said it best: "take that shit to the gym!" You know what I mean? One thing is to dance hard, another is to act like a douchebag! Big up to Gainesville, DC/Maryland, Athens, Georgia!

**MRR: Dub, tell me about how you put together the lyrics for a song usually.**

Dub: Well, I usually like to keep the whole band involved in the process of writing lyrics. Not all of the lyrics are written by me. I think the environment all of us have grown up in plays the biggest role in the lyrics that we have written with Mehkago so far. It's easy to be pissed off living in a place like Miami where people always seem like they are out to get you. The weather is nice but the shitty people and bad attitudes are what have inspired me to write lyrics with Mehkago. My lyrics are usually straightforward and simple, and I tend to repeat parts a lot, I guess it's just part of my style and it's the way I feel best expressing myself. The *Human Extinction* EP was written as an apocalyptic outlook on natural disasters and the possibilities of what's to come.



Harold: Some of us in the band contribute to writing lyrics, but Dub writes most of them. There's one song that I wrote about what I saw growing up in Cuba when I was a kid, "Fall of the Bastard." It breaks down how the Cuban people saw Castro as a savior at first and then the deceiving murderer that he became. This is a strong subject for me because I saw how my family was treated for being against the system and for wanting to leave the country. A lot of people think, and I've had conversations with different people, even from other countries, that the situation in Cuba is not that bad. They'll defend it by saying shit like they have free healthcare and the education is great. Yeah, those things are true, but at what price? The people pay the fuckin' price; step out of line and say the wrong shit and speak up against the government and watch how you get locked the fuck up quick, or worse!

**MRR: This is a really interesting point of view. Do you feel like the punk scene commonly misunderstands the reality of what's going on in Cuba? A lot of people that are hostile to Castro are usually painted as former Batista supporters and people who were ripping off the country. I don't think a lot of people have heard the perspective of people who were Castro supporters at first and then turned against him.**

Harold: I don't think people here in South Florida misunderstand the situation in Cuba but I do think that people around the country don't really pay too much attention to the real situation and the reality of what's really going on. It doesn't really matter if you lived through the "dictatorshit" that existed before Castro or if you've lived through the "dictatorshit" that he created! Human rights are being violated all the time in Cuba and most people could give a flying fuck! If anything, I hope punks are aware of this and don't sympathize with that bullshit mentality! For example, people wearing a shirt with Che Guevara's face on it—do you know what that stands for? Do your fucking homework! One of the main things that drew me to this music is taking a giant shit on all forms of government and organized religion!

**MRR: What's next for the band, and what do you want to get out of it in the long run?**

Berny: This new record, hopefully a tour later this year. I love playing extreme music. As long as I can do that, nothing else really matters. I'm glad that people around the country have taken notice.

Harold: We're going to be putting out a ten-song record and tape. In the next few months we will be touring the East Coast again. I think I already got what I wanted out of this band. It's been nothing but fun ever since we started. I always wanted to play this type of shit and just fuckin' destroy and that is what I wanted Mehkago NT to be. I poop all the time, about six times day, what more can I ask for? Mehkago NT!! That's it. *305 DEATH SQUAD!!!*

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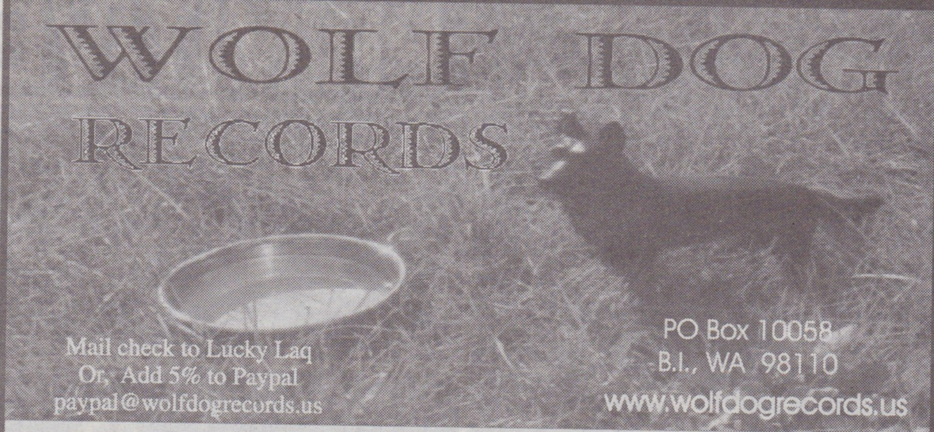


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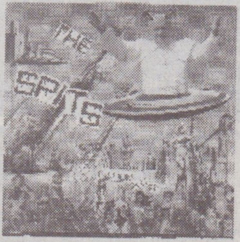

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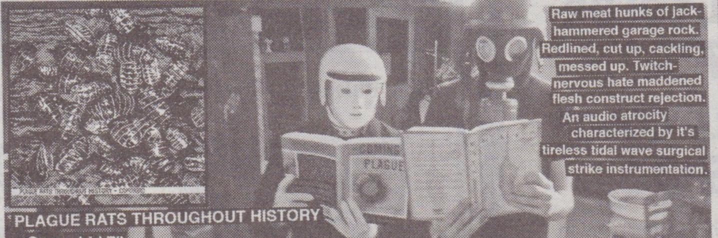


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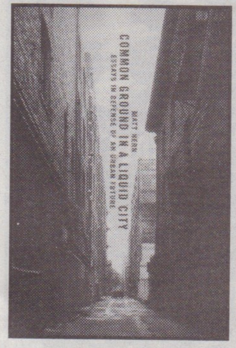
# BOOKS

***I Like to Keep My Troubles on the Windy Side of Things***
**Buzz Poole**
**150 pages • $10**
**Fractious Press**
**1988 Amsterdam Ave. #1**
**New York, NY 10032**

Buzz Poole's book of short stories, apparently his first of fiction, is a crisp collection of twelve stories out on New York's micro independent press Fractious Press. Although I'll quickly reveal the lack of depth of my literary knowledge, I'd say that in essence this collection does exactly what short stories are required to do. Brief moments in time expanded and focused on. The moments that Poole focuses on are on the surface mundane, but given the frame in which he puts them, reflect the larger truths and struggles of life. Poole's characters cut across a wide swath of types and classes as some of the stories feel like the autobiographical reflections of a twenty-something hipster, while others are peopled with priests and bums just scuffling through. The common tie among all the stories and characters is a general sense of striving for dignity while living on the shit side of society's stick.

After reading Poole's stories, it was hard not to make more of the snippets of conversations overheard in line at the grocery store or in the coffee shop. Every human interaction flowers in its frame as personal history and hopes play out in every day life. If anything, this was what I most enjoyed about this collection; the meditative quality that it added to the everyday moments occurring in the world around me. Furthermore, this collection is perfect in other ways. The layout and cover are great. It's a pocket-sized paperback with a beautiful woodcut print on a sturdy cardstock for a cover. I've enjoyed all three of the books put out by Fractious Press so far and here's hoping that there're more of these little gems to be had in the near future.

— Ben Howell




***Common Ground In A Liquid City: Essays In Defense Of An Urban Future***
**Matt Hern**
**240 pages • $17.95**
**AK Press**
**674-A 23rd Street**
**Oakland, CA 94612**
**http://www.akpress.org**

The question of how to sustain and preserve the natural resources of the world we inhabit is one that has become more urgent as population increases and resources become scarcer. In *Common Ground In A Liquid City*, Matt Hern posits that our cities need to become denser with population, life and community. Hern travels the globe, looking at what various cities are doing correctly or incorrectly and how to use these ideas to build what could be the ideal city of the future.

Early in the book Hern sets forth three contentions: First, the only chance the world has for an ecological future is for the vast bulk of us to live in cities. Second, the liquid nature of capital, goods, and population needs to be made more solid within the city. Finally, that cities need engaged citizens: people who are willing and able to participate in common life-and governance structures that actively encourage them. As a whole, this book is "considering and evaluating contemporary urbanism using Vancouver (Hern's hometown) as a kind of Petri dish, as a place full of possibility, to think radically and realistically about what a viable and libratory city might look like."

The points made by Hern in defense of his arguments are solid. In his essay "Keeping It Real" he tells of how society often takes nature and reconfigures it to the wants and needs of city planners and designers. He uses a real life example of how Vancouver set to "restore" a park without considering how the native people of the area had used the land for generations "…it's about truly remembering what we stand on and also acknowledging whom we stand beside…" The essay is an honest assessment that aesthetic pleasure is not the only thing a city needs in a park. A planned park should embrace nature, history and function at once and become a living part of the city, something pertinent to all.

The author argues that we need to make our city populations denser in housing and population for a sustainable future. Again, Hern's position is solid and makes a lot of sense. Hern's argument begins to crumble in these essays when he delves deeper into the details. Hern states that drive for profit needs to abate for true success in building communities. In a capitalistic society where governments are handing out contracts to build expensive condos this will be a difficult task to realize. The author needs to offer up some real solutions on how to do this in a capitalist economy. I find these parts of the book somewhat confounding in that they point out the problem, but not the realistic solution.

One solution that is offered is to look to New York City as the ideal in building a dense city: "82 percent of Manhattan residents travel to work by public transit, by bicycle or on foot. That's ten times the rate for Americans in general." Also, "NYC is more populous than all but eleven states; if it were granted statehood, it would rank 51st in per-capita energy use…" The problem is how to get the planners, the developers, the government and the people in the community to work together to reach this goal? How are greed and the lust for ever-growing profits removed from the equation? In the end, the biggest obstacle to growing the ideal city is the pursuit of profit. It is overcoming this barrier where Hern most struggles, failing to offer a solution that does not call for a total rethinking of our political systems.

Hern attacks micromanagement of public spaces in "No Recipe For Urban Funk." He focuses on the many bylaws that are written, but never enforced, with regard to Vancouver's city parks. The question here is, do the long list of bylaws kill the sense of community? When there are prohibitive bylaws in place do they punish those that act properly? Some would argue that they indeed do, but what happens if everyone does not act in the proper manner? Sadly, the reality is that the actions of a few dictate the laws for the many and it would seem that most of these laws are needed. Hern argues that community should be allowed to grow organically into a living, breathing thing. This is a commendable thought, but what happens when some see this as an opportunity to prey on an area with lax laws

and enforcement? Another shortcoming in these essays is that the author sometimes forgets that not all people in and around a community have the best interest of others in mind.

I find the point in "Where The Rapids Are" puzzling. It seems that Hern is shocked that there is a negative relation between diversity and social capital, "trust in neighbors, confidence in local government, volunteering, expectations of reciprocity, and much else declined in neighborhoods where there was more ethnic diversity, and especially, immigration." I do not see why this is a shock to anyone. Individual ethnic groups have, for hundreds of years, started communities. Right or wrong, the majority of people feel more comfortable around their own group and to deny that fact is incredibly short sighted. I may not feel this way, the readers of this review may not feel this way, but the majority of the general public does feel this way. To deny or be shocked by this is perplexing.

"Snake Eyes" is a great piece on the city as a commodity. Hern looks at the ultimate example of the city as commodity, Las Vegas. Vegas has shown itself as the ultimate in how not to build a sustainable city. When the economy collapsed, service jobs were not needed, construction dried up and unemployment doubled in twelve months. Hern shows that when you build the city as a theme park, with no real business and no real industry, you may see short-term gain, but things can collapse quickly. Atlantic City learned this lesson first and now Vegas is learning it as well. With the continuing legalization and expansion of gambling in the United States how many more cities are destined to make the same mistakes?

"Sustaining Privilege" is an essay that may raise some eyebrows. In this essay on how the middle class and the poor are being priced out of the cities, the author states, "the top end of the (housing) market has to be restrained aggressively and the bottom end has to be generously supported." Hern really loses me with this one. I understand the thinking, but I find it unnatural and unrealistic in a capitalistic society. He further alienates me by proposing that "subsidized housing, rent supplement programs, shelters of all kinds, emergency beds, city-run SRO's…every rendition of public and social housing needs to be investigated." I find the arguments in this essay a bit far fetched. The part that I struggle with is the implication that this can be done within the housing market only. Hern is basically calling for a total overhaul of our capitalist system, which at this point may be an almost impossible dream.

After almost losing me, Hern pulls me back in with the "Urbavore" essay. The ideas presented in this essay are those that the reader can take to their community, implement almost immediately, and see some real impact. The big point here is the argument for local gardening. The thought is that when one person starts to garden; it creates dialogue with the neighbors, who also start to garden and this evolves until the entire block is gardening, sharing the fruit of the labor and growing a true community. Once the block has become a community, it needs to grow to a citywide movement. If the city puts a program together that pushes for this, a true community and a truly sustainable city can grow from the actions of just a few people. This essay is one that should really be read and acted upon by many city dwellers.

To sum things up, Hern is calling for a totally new way to look at the city. The people need to be the drivers of this movement, not the government, not the planners and not the developers. The people that live in the community need to be involved in all aspects of how their city is planned and grown. If the people are not invited to be involved, they need to force their involvement.

The essays in this book, while maybe a little too idealistic, still offer some real points that can be used to grow true communities. Hern has put together a very thought-provoking book. My hope is that everyone who reads *Common Ground In A Liquid City* will take something learned and use it to grow their city, their neighborhood, or even just their block into something living and in the long run, sustainable.

— Trent Reinsmith

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# MOVIES

## BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

## CAROLYN KEDDY

### DOWN BY THE JETTY

At my house we have this Dr. Feelgood live DVD called **Going Back Home** from 1975. If you have never seen or heard Dr. Feelgood before, one minute watching this live show will have you addicted. Dr. Feelgood was one of those bands that seem to have been generally overlooked in the history of rock. Yet their live show was wild and their songs were great. During this particular show guitarist Wilko Johnson dressed in black with a black guitar with red pick guard keeps his body completely still while his feet quickly shuffle it across the stage, playing in his strange choppy style. His eyes are bugging out making him look completely deranged. Singer Lee Brilleaux is dressed in a white suit that has turned gray from many sweat-filled shows spent rolling on the floor. He looks cool and attractive in a slightly repulsive way. Bass player Sparko is dressed in a baby blue suit with wide lapels and high-heels. He paces back and forth on the stage while playing. Collectively they look like nothing I have ever seen before or since. When I heard there was a documentary about the band coming out, I couldn't wait to see it.

The documentary is **Oil City Confidential**. The film starts where the band does on Canvey Island. Canvey Island is approximately thirty miles east of London. Its history as a vacation spot for East Londoners as well as the flood of 1953 and introduction of the oil refineries all contribute to the formation of the band Dr. Feelgood. Director Julien Temple known for his punk documentaries establishes the band as the precursor to punk. Dr. Feelgood too rebelled against the music industry though in the early '70s. Popular bands were already getting into synthesizers and bloated performances. Dr. Feelgood was still into the blues and R&B that was influential to the English rock bands of the '60s. Wilko Johnson bluntly states in an archival interview, "Rock'n'roll is not about the Hobbit and things like that". He also dubbed Canvey Island "Oil City" joking that the band lived on the Thames Delta to give the band more of a southern US blues faux authenticity.

The future members of Dr. Feelgood started playing in jug bands while teenagers to entertain tourists outside of the local pubs. Johnson had a band with his brother and future Dr. Feelgood drummer John Martin aka The Big Figure. Brilleaux and Sparko formed their own band while Johnson was off attending college. When he returned he was asked to join the new rock'n'roll group. The band began playing pubs around England getting their first "break" when the band Ducks Deluxe had to cancel a show. Dr. Feelgood quickly became part of the pub rock scene. **Oil City Confidential** asserts that Joe Strummer first started playing guitar after seeing Dr. Feelgood. The soon-to-be Princess Diana also went to see the band. Clem Burke of Blondie also remembers seeing Dr. Feelgood while visiting England and bringing back the band's second album *Malpractice*, introducing it to everyone in the New York rock scene. The Ramones ended up opening for Dr. Feelgood on one their US tours.

Of course, the good times never last. With popularity come ego trips, excessive drinking, drugs and the usual misunderstandings. One newspaper interview with Johnson showed in the **Oil City Confidential** was titled "For wealth, fame and power I'd eat shit." Brilleaux and Johnson stopped speaking due to different lifestyles. Brilleaux liked to drink; Johnson preferred speed. The final clash inevitably came while in the recording studio.

Director Temple does a good job in building up Dr. Feelgood's importance as well its downfall. One thing that really gets on my nerves in **Oil City Confidential** is Temple's excessive use of old film clips to emphasize what is being said on screen. A little is tolerable and can be fun. It is a device Temple has been using in his music documentaries back to **The Great Rock N Roll Swindle**. However his need in **Oil City Confidential** to visualize each word said by each interviewee with an old film clips goes beyond annoying during this film. It is particularly the case when Wilko is discussing his getting kicked out of (or leaving) the band. The story itself is a compelling one so the extra bits constantly interrupting it are very unnecessary and take away from the impact.

**Oil City Confidential** basically ends when Johnson leaves Dr. Feelgood. Most people including Brilleaux's mother admit to not seeing the band after that. The band continues in 2010 though without any original members. A few of the later details are filled in like the band having their only top ten hit "Milk and Alcohol" post-Johnson. Johnson unsuccessfully tries a solo career. Brilleaux gets diagnosed with cancer. I would have liked to know why Wilko didn't participate in the final show Brilleaux planned while he was doing chemotherapy. Although I am sure I can guess at the answer. However, Johnson now plays an annual memorial show with the other original members on Brilleaux's birthday. (http://alternative.artsalliancemedia.com/oilcity/)

**Every Other Day Is Halloween** brings back an interesting and seemingly forgotten period in US television. Before cable and station consolidation there were local channels not affiliated with a network that would produce their own programs. TV watchers had few choices back then so these smaller productions had the chance of being as popular as network ones. One such station was Channel 20 WDCA in Washington, DC. The creative man there was Dick Dyszel who at one point played the station's Bozo the Clown, spaceman Captain 20 and horror host Count Gore De Vol.

**Every Other Day Is Halloween** tells Dyszel story mostly focusing on his Count character. The Count seemed and continues to be the one character he enjoyed doing. The children's characters of Bozo and Captain 20 were done at the station management's insistence. Count Gore De Vol introduced the DC area to horror movies, influencing future writers and horror hosts. The show enjoyed some years of success notably beating out *Saturday Night Live* during its first season, though getting crushed during the second. The show was so popular Penthouse magazine would send its touring playmates to appear on the show. Then Station 20 was sold and the new owners had no interest in continuing to produce shows.

While there doesn't seem to be any horror hosts on any of my television stations these days, the tradition along with newer additions to the genre is well represented on the internet where Count Gore De Vol continues to this day. (http://brinkdvd.com/)

I didn't grow up in San Francisco. I moved here when I was twenty-one after finishing college after failing to get a job in Boston. I didn't know much about how the city looked or behaved in the years prior to my arrival, so I enjoy watching San Francisco in films where you can a slight glimpse of what things looked like. Fortunately there have been a bunch of films set in the city. A couple of my favorites **Woman On The Run** and **Lady From Sanghai** both have climaxes set at the Ocean Bach amusement park Playland At The Beach.

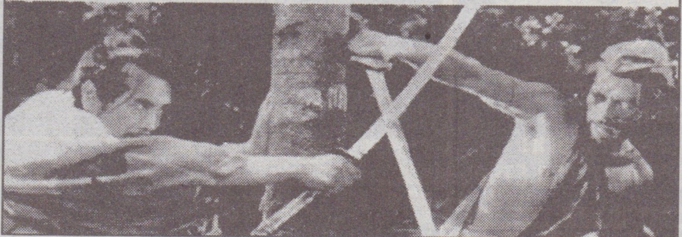
Playland At The Beach shut down in 1972 to be replaced recently by condos. That seems to be the destiny for most beach front amusement

parks. **Remembering Playland At The Beach** is a low budget film that collects the memories of people who worked at and visited the park during its heyday as well as its decline. Through these memories with footage and photographs of the park you get a good sense of what it was like. The filmmakers aren't afraid to include the bad along with the good. While most look back fondly, one interviewee seems to recall only the worst of the rides and the atmosphere at the time. I am amused by the negativity. I enjoy the history.

Visitors and residents of San Francisco can still ride on Playland's original carousel, which is operating at Yerba Buena Park, South of Market, SF. www.garfieldlaneproductions.com

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area, let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it. www.carolynkeddy.com

# FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI



**NO FUN BEING A GRUB**

It's either wisdom or folly, but the Independent Film Channel took a risk when it chose to release the latest film by Dutch director Tom Six. A number of viewers claim it's one of the creepiest films in recent memory. But if you happen to possess a cast iron stomach (I do), you'll be talking and thinking about **The Human Centipede** for some time to come.

It starts off unremarkably, as two American girls, Lindsay and Jenny (Ashley Williams, Ashlynn Yennie) find themselves lost and with a flat tire on the fringe of a German forest; their cell phones are useless, and they're miles from civilization. The girls are dressed to party, and that's then an obese, middle-aged man pulls up to them. They can't possibly know that he's spouting crudities at the pair, and the whole episode so unnerves them that they decide to strike out on their own. That's their second mistake. (Their first was not staying home that night. It's going to be a rough night.)

They get lost. Then, it starts raining. The girls curse at each other, but finally make their way to a modern, attractive dwelling at a crook in the road. There's a sign outside that says, "My sweet 3-dog." When Lindsay and Jenny stumble indoors, they're met by the diffident gaze of Dr. Heiter (Dieter Laser), who doesn't seem to have mastered of the basics of courtesy, much less conversation.

"You have a really lovely house. Do you live here with your wife?"

"No," answers Dr. Heiter. "I don't like human beings." He collapses onto a pile of overstuffed cushions and stares into space. While I've met any number of people who have pronounced the same opinion as Dr. Heiter at one time or another, it's unnerving to hear these sentiments from a diffident German in a horror movie; the groaning soundtrack only portends the worst. It's an encouraging sign that the doctor offers them a refreshment as they wait for someone to repair their car. It's a bad sign that only thing he can offer is tap water. If you're an aficionado of horror films, you can guess what's going to happen next; when the girls awaken, they find that they're both bound securely to hospital beds, next to a man whose fate will be sealed by a drip of intravenous poison.

As the two girls squeal in terror, they can't know that their current situation is actually quite cozy compared to what's coming. Remember the "My sweet 3-dog" sign in front of the house? That's to honor the memory of the doctor's most recent operation, involving his three deceased Rottweilers.

Writer/director Tom Six came up with the inspiration for **The Human Centipede** after watching more than his share of formulaic TV shows. How fitting it would be, he said, if a particularly nasty character were to have his lips sewn to a hulking, flatulent truck driver, as punishment? He confabbed with a several doctors, and the limited consensus was that possible – theoretically, at least.

After hashing out the basic details, Tom Six began to cast and produce his rather sick concept, which basically connects the alimentary canals and urinary tracts of three different individuals into a single organism. Six enthusiastically assures us that the procedure is medically possible. It's not common knowledge that Josef Mengele performed operations to create his own Siamese twins; filmmaker Tom Six drew upon this infamous history in making **The Human Centipede**.

By one account, the idea behind the screenplay was so loathsome that a number of actresses walked out on the spot. The girls chosen for the roles of Lindsay and Jenny had a particularly challenge; they would spend half of their on-screen time as the rear two-thirds of the "centipede."

Your reaction to the film will likely depend upon seriously you take it. The basic plot – and it's very basic – has a Cronenberg-like affinity to twisted films like **Dead Ringers**. Once you move beyond the grim subject matter, the story gives way to a bone-dry humor, and Dieter Laser is just about perfect as the demented doctor whose plans aspire to the worst ever carried out in Auschwitz.

Director/writer Six was so pleased with **The Human Centipede** that he plans to release a sequel: **The Human Centipede: The Full Sequence**. It's hard to imagine, given the fate of the characters, exactly how the plot will play out; but given the bizarre details of the original story, one can only imagine.

Two columns back, I confidently handicapped the Oscar for best foreign picture—by confidently announcing that winner would be Michael Haneke's **The White Ribbon**. After all, that was just about everybody's inside pick. Unfortunately, the Academy voters decided to choose another film instead. While **The White Ribbon** is subtle and technically accomplished—very much a critic's favorite—Argentina's **The Secret in Their Eyes** comes off overall as more penetrating and hard-hitting, and definitely more an audience pick.

Benjamin Esposito (Ricardo Darin) has been fitfully working on a manuscript for months, with nothing more than a notebook of scribbles for his efforts. The retired legal investigator finds that his attention returns to one case in particular—a brutal rape and murder. Irene Menendez (Soledad Villamil), a judge and colleague, is also bothered by the case—even though most of the details are almost a quarter century old. Most of the narrative involves revisiting the past to follow the course of justice—and retribution—in a world that, increasingly, spurns legalistic ideas of morality.

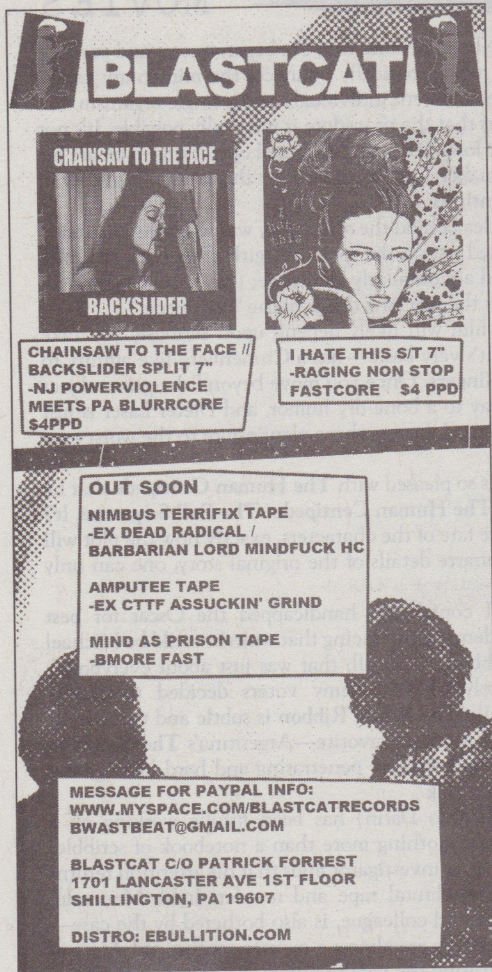
Thinking back to that initial investigation, Esposito finds the case challenging and frustrating. However, after searching through the victim's photo albums, one suspect shows up again and again. Isadoro Gomez (Javier Godino) appears in a cache of pictures, usually looking straight at the very woman who would eventually be the tragic victim. Benjamin is a seasoned investigator, and usually one of the first to note "the secret in the eyes" of likely criminals. But secrets like these are sometimes deceptive, and new information forces him to reexamine old facts with new eyes.

The film's cinematic tour de force happens at a packed soccer match—filmed in what's meant to seem like one continuous take—a five-minute action sequence, no edits. The camera floats into a roaring stadium, through the stands, and finally the bleachers; a tense chase scene finally unites the detective and his main suspect at a chanting football match. It's the most electrifying sequence in the whole film. It's only then that the issues of justice and retribution become more complicated—and their resolution more challenging.

Aside from that, however, the story has a relaxed pace that places equal emphasis on the characters' relationships and the mystery behind the case itself. More a character study than a standard action vehicle, you'll find the soundtrack of soothing piano music less jarring than that of your standard suspense film. Writer/director Juan Jose Campanella shows skill with the variegated plot, abetted by the rich photography; the director does an especially strong job of framing key dramatic moments subtly and economically. While Campanella has also had success directing American TV, this feature better displays his dramatic talents.

**The Secret in Their Eyes** doesn't contain any great insights into causes of criminality; it's never a matter of good and bad, only guilt and innocence. For that matter, we never find out why this particular crime has special significance to the Benjamin Esposito character. But the story is simple and handsomely mounted. It has a surprisingly moving denouement that ties the mystery and its commentary on justice into an agreeable package.

Overall, however, some may come away feel a bit underwhelmed by it all. Given its Oscar buzz, it's right to expect a little more than we get in **The Secret in Their Eyes**.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(AM) Allan McNaughton
(MU) Andrew Murphy
(RM) Ryan Murphy
(IS) Mark Murrmann
(RR) Randy Ransone
(KS) Ken Sanderson
(FS) Fred Schrunk
(MS) Martin Sorrondeguy
(SS) Steve Spinali
(AU) Andrew Underwood
(XV) XYosefX

**ABOLITION / HANG THE BASTARD – split EP**

Last week I got a hankering to flip through some of the records in my collection that I hadn't pulled out in a while and I ended up jamming some CHOKEHOLD and MORNING AGAIN, which left me primed and ready for ABOLITION. This "London Straight Edge Wolfpack" plays some vintage late-'90s moshcore with sick breakdowns and crucial windmill mosh parts. The vocals are a bit on the weak side (dude, *yell*, don't just talk!) but the sick INTEGRITY-style solo in the second song is right on. This isn't normally my scene, but I still have a soft spot for this type of hardcore and they do it very well. If anything, HANG THE BASTARD is even more crucial. I love the way the drummer works the double-kicks and rides the crash in classic mosh style. These dudes are a bit more ALL OUT WAR in terms of the metal-to-hardcore ratio, with some sludgy bits and melodic flourishes that make their sound a bit more unique than that of ABOLITION. The vocals are tuff as fuck too, especially the gang back-ups. They almost lost me during the extended melodic part in the second track, but the mosh part was so hard they won me back. I almost hate to admit it, but I was drinking a beer while I wrote this review. (AU)
(Hit Time / Break Through / Disposable Culture)

**ACHZAVOTH / SUCKINIM BAENAIM – split EP**

Two terrible Tel Aviv metal bands split a record co-released by five different labels. I'd like to describe the music better than just saying "it's pure shit," but that sums it up perfectly. I hope the Muslims or Jews come out on top because Israeli Satanists have nothing to offer the world. (MU)
(Family Business / Urban Decay / Ajax vs Hector / Power Negi / Dancing on Sharks)

**STEVE ADAMYK – "Speed It Up / 20/20"**

Two tracks of energy-in-the-red power-pop. Sounds like it was recorded way back then, taking the punk of the BUZZCOCKS and mixing it with the delicious sweetness of the POINTED STICKS. The tunes will stick, the hooks on full hum alert and enough polished groove to have those dancing shoes off the couch and on the floor. (SD)
(P. Trash)

**CHARLES ALBRIGHT – "I'm Happy, I'm a Genius" EP**

Seven blown-out, repetitive, no-fi songs, a one-man-shitstorm of a band. In general I'm not that into one-man bands, but Mr. ALBRIGHT does a great job of pulling off some killer songs, some straying into the INTELLIGENCE or the DIPERS territory, while others ("Young Woman") are more rocking; then he take us into what sounds like NO BALLS/BRAINBOMBS territory on "Hats Off to (Ron) Harper." Overall good, but I just can't help think how much better it'd sound played by a full band. But what the hell do I know? (IS)
(Permanent)

**ALEHAMMER / TYRANT – split LP**

This record rules. Death-thrashy crust punk from both bands. ALEHAMMER contains members of DEVIATED INSTINCT, IMPULSE MANSLAUGHTER, DOOM, EXTINCTION OF MANKIND, etc. This, in addition to the band name (HELLHAMMER) and cover art (VENOM), gives you an accurate idea of what they sound like. The recording is raw, noisy and powerful; the vocals are mostly guttural. Love 'em. The riffs are simple, driving, pretty ripping. Good stuff. Swedish band TYRANT, akin to contemporaries DISHAMMER and CHOKE.THIRST.DIE., exploit the parallels between DISCHARGE and old-school black and death metal. The production suits the style perfectly. The guitar tone reeks of HELLHAMMER. Among TYRANT's membership is Daniel Ekeroth, author of the *Swedish Death Metal* book that came out sometime in the past few years, and Peter Bjargo of Swedish bands MEANWHILE, CRYPT OF KERBEROS, MACRODEX, etc. This is a really solid record with good artwork, nice packaging and most importantly good music! Another exceptional release from Agipunk! (DB)
(Agipunk)

**ALE MANIA – "Lustfulfistful/Vomitpig"**

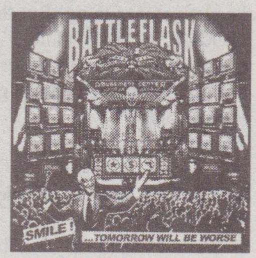
This is a kind of schizophrenic band with an unabashed new wave style. Side A is a fast electronic dance song. The riff sounds similar to DEVO's "Whip It," but sped up four times as fast. Below the beats are some barely audible whispered vocals. Side B is gothy '80s pop complete with a cheesy keyboard riff. The lyrics are sung very sincerely, but the song is called "Vomitpig" so I guess it may be done ironically. (CK)
(Volar)

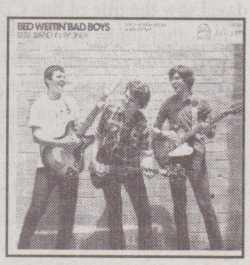
**THE ANCHOR / O PIONEERS – split EP**

When I hear groups like this, I can't help but just lump them into this faceless, soulless lump of bands that I associate with No Idea Records. It just doesn't sound any different from other groups that have HOT WATER MUSIC, AGAINST ME!, or JAWBREAKER as their influences. Perhaps this is unfair to these two bands, but this is my opinion. (GH)
(Kiss of Death)

**ANIAETLEPROGRAMMEUR – "Ich Bin Mude" EP**

A duo from Paris with angular, pounding guitar and drums, reverb-drenched vocals and keyboard lines for melodies. But it really just sounds like BRAINIAC-lite mixed with the VSS-lite and maybe a little FAINT-macho mixed in. (MU)
(Plastic Spoons)



**ANTIBUBBLES – "Pop" LP**

I got a bit sidetracked while searching for more detailed contact info for these guys—I read all kinds of fun stuff about what anti-bubbles are and how to make my own. I'm kinda nerdy like that. Anywho, ANTIBUBBLES are self-described as reminiscent of WEEZER, the PIXIES, and DINOSAUR JR. While I don't really pick up on the latter two, I can totally hear the WEEZER influence—mostly because its primarily mid-tempo pop music with really catchy vocal patterns and plenty of synth to grab your attention. I think this is what WEEZER would sound like these days, had they not gone down the road of suck. (BD)
(self-released)

**THE BABIES – "Meet Me in the City/Somebody Else"**

Up until now, I didn't care much for this band. I dismissed them as boring New York pop, but this single totally won me over. "Somebody Else" is an undeniably fun song—beautifully crafted garage pop, brimming with harmonies and cool riffs. "Meet Me in the City" is also tragically catchy; no flaw comes to mind. This single would be filed in the "Easy Listening" section of punk, but it's good. All smiles, sunshine and walking around in the grass barefoot. It's not mind blowing, but it defiantly makes me want to re-listen to whatever single I'd heard before. If you like melody-driven garage with tambourines and all that shit, track down this record. (FS)
(Make a Mess)

**BASS DRUM OF DEATH – "High School Roaches" EP**

A better band than their name would lead you to believe. They are a pretty cool sounding guitar-and-drums two-piece from Mississippi. They make real catchy tunes that are like a mix between MARKED MEN and the STOOGES. It's catchy stuff with killer guitar riffs; it works well when they're playing fast, but doesn't transition too well when they try to do the slow stoner thing. But then again, I thought the STOOGES' "We Will Fall" was a big turd in the middle of an otherwise killer album. So maybe I just don't smoke enough pot to "get it." Seriously though, good record. (FS)
(Baby Don't)

**BATTLEFLASK – "Smile! Tomorrow Will Be Worse" CD**

When I went to my mailbox thing here at HQ today, I saw the title of this CD peeking out from under some other junk. My first thought was "Fuck yeah! A new *Tomorrow Will Be Worse* comp! Why is it on CD? Better yet, why'd they give it to me to review?" Soon after the confusion cleared and I realized it was merely the title of the CD by this band BATTLEFLASK. Bummer. What we have here is some workin'-class, drinkin' and a-fightin' rock that would be right at home on Hellcat Records or Longshot Music. For what it's worth: not bad, but not really my cup of tea. I guess you can't win 'em all. (BD)
(Fallen Angel)

**BED WETTIN' BAD BOYS – "Best/Worst Band in Sydney" EP**

This four-song EP consists of feedback-drenched rock that reminds me of a younger, noisier, sloppier REPLACEMENTS. So, I guess they kinda sound like the REPLACEMENTS when they were just beginning. It's not great but it isn't bad either. There's just a lack of hooks to reel you in and make you want to play this record over and over again. I think this is their first record, so maybe they'll get better over time, like the REPLACEMENTS, and then get marginal recognition and then break up and then one of them will have a sort-of-OK solo career. (GH)
(Rip Society)

**BEYOND PINK – "The New Black" LP**

All-ladies five-piece from Malmö, Sweden that delivers some fast, pissed-off hardcore tunes with a Swedish HC sound. The tempo is mostly fast, there are galloping guits and lots of melodic guitar leads, but wait…some youth crew-ish chants, rock'n'roll parts, smatterings of driving mid-tempo crust drums and guitar. There is a lot going on, but it all totally works. The vocals are higher-pitched, but more yelling, rather than screamy (thankfully). All the singers have gritty and gravely tones to their voice and sound fucking tough; the lead vocalist is sorta like a female John Brannon. In my opinion, the band's collective ethics, represented by their lyrics, are pretty right on. They make personal comments on how larger issues directly affect them, and they sing in Swedish and in English (but all Swedish songs include a short description of their subject matter). Their song "Svennerasse in Disguise" speaks volumes to me as I have been put in the bullshit situation of being a "credit to my race." Fuck that. I have to comment on the cover—it looks like a promo shot for the Fly Girls from *In Living Color*, not that it's a bad thing… I admit, I hate photo shoots of bands and I can't stand shit that is super polished in most any medium, but I definitely get the feeling that they are reacting to something with their almost nauseatingly colorful style. I get it and dig it. Punk is fun, damn it, and they seem comfortable with that. I am super down with this and hopefully there will be more bands out there like it. Serious, pissed-off ladies that don't take themselves too seriously. This record rules, and, no, it does not sound like SPITBOY. (MB)
(Emancy Punx)

**BIG FUCKIN' SKULL – "Skulls Rule – OK?" CD**

Every single song on this CD (minus one) has the word "skull" in the title. It has lines like "Real skulls want to fuck you in the face." It sounds like this major joke, but all the pictures of the band shows them looking all tough and serious and wearing skull-face make-up. I don't think it's a joke. There's an obvious MISFITS influence mixed with some serious guitar solos. I can't listen to this anymore. In this day and age, you have to be careful wearing skull make-up because someone might mistake you for a Juggalo. (GH)
(self-released)

**BLACK TRIANGLES – "Mannequin" EP**

Three fuzzed-out, snotty and edgy punk rippers from this Valencia, California four-piece. A song about prostituting oneself out for Insulin and two others about being a shiftless oaf. Despairing stuff indeed. (RR)
(Stress Domain)

**BLOODSHED REMAINS – "What We Live For" CD**

Yo sucka, Austrian mosh-core in the house motherfucker! *Fuuuck iiiiit uuuuup!* For real 'dough, this is pure, unadulterated mosh to the fullest. For fans of HATEBREED, MADBALL, PANTERA, etc. This lyric: "…we're born in the mosh pit." Yup. Sick. (JU)
(Burnside)

**BORN AGAINST – "The Rebel Sound of Shit and Failure" LP**

Dang, dawg. Here's one I don't gotta put on to review. As you probably are aware, BORN AGAINST started in 1989 in fuckin' NYC and were integral to the rise of early-'90s underground hardcore punk. They had a radio debate with SICK OF IT ALL! This is the third release of this LP, the second on Prank. I don't hear any difference between the various releases, and the packaging variations are slight. Compiled here are the *Eulogy* 7", the split 7"s with UNIVERSAL ORDER OF ARMAGEDDON and SCHREECHING WEASEL, the split 8" with MAN IS THE BASTARD, one track from the split flexi with SUCKERPUNCH, and songs from compilations. This material ranges from their beginnings to just about their end. If you never heard 'em, well, you oughta. They had a heavy sound, sometimes fast, often off-kilter and lurching, sometimes dragged the fuck out and crushing. The lyrics were particularly well done, angry and insightful. The split 8" stuff, which closes out this record, is rather bleak. In their day, BORN AGAINST, along with FILTH and SCHREECHING WEASEL, were the best thing going in the US, in my estimation. Sitting here now, jamming "$5 an Hour," "My Favorite Housing Project," "The Good Father," "Eulogy," "Resist Control," their cover of *The Jeffersons* theme, et al., this shit still fucking kills. (JM)
(Prank)

**BRILLIANT COLORS – "Never Mine/Kissing's Easy"**

This is a good single. Two solid tracks right in line with what you'd expect from BRILLIANT COLORS. Mid-tempo songs that sound very distant and dreamy. Somewhat jangly guitars with heavy reverb on the harmonizing vocals. Its music that's soft around the edges but undeniably rocking. (FS)
(Slumberland)

**BRILLIANT COLORS – "Walk into the World/ Bad Vibes"**

BRILLIANT COLORS have returned to the label that released their debut EP. Listening to that record from a couple years ago, it's clear how much this band has progressed—they're a bit faster, much tighter and they have a much more confident and cohesive delivery. Fans of jangly guitars and subtle but memorable hooks should keep an eye out for this and their other recently released single. (CS)
(Make a Mess)

**THE BRIMSTONES – "Serve Cold" EP**

The promo insert had me fearing the worst: "in the grand tradition of records that don't suck" (Can we retire "this doesn't suck? Please?), "balls out rock'n'roll"—*yish*. Tackling an already perfected song like the ILLUSIONS' "City of People" also inspired some foreboding (as does any *Back from the Grave* cover), but this disc is actually pretty swell. Good production (but not so good as to be shiny and uninteresting), a little SWAMP RATS evident in their arrangement of aforementioned "City of People," a certain similarity to DMZ (especially evident on "Put Out or Get Out"), and this one gets a big thumbs-up. (DD)
(Go Ape)

**BROKEN BONES – "Fuck You and All You Stand For" CD**

Meet the new BROKEN BONES. Not the same as the old BROKEN BONES. This is my first experi-

ence with the 'BONES post-*Seeing Through My Eyes* so I have no idea what the last ten-or-so records have been like. On that note, if this were a record by some random new band, I'd definitely hold it in a different regard. It would probably seem better. Maybe that's not fair, but what is, right? The tunes are still punk with a much more thrash and metal sound, even in the recording. On the other hand it has a weird drone-y/repetitious feel that it seems like it shouldn't, which throws it off-kilter in a weird and good (?) way. I don't know. It's BROKEN BONES in 2010. It's not too good but it might have a moment or two. (JU)
(Dem Bones)

**THE BULEMICS / THE 13TH VICTIM – split EP**

The 13TH VICTIM's not so bad really—they are an acceptable street-punk band. They're bummed and can express that rapidly. Thanks for keeping it brief. I don't really care for street-punk, but this is fine. The BULEMICS are another story entirely. As if their graphic description of a fantasy (I'll give them that much credit at least) gang rape / snuff scenario in their first track "Bloodsucking Freaks" wasn't unappetizing enough, the music also just kind of sucks. They're playing really straightforward HC and trying to add some dissonance in places where it just doesn't matter. The singer's voice is weak and sounds like a 12-year-old trying to smother himself with his own pillow, which, no matter how you frame it, is a bummer. Don't get me wrong, both bands are effectively producing a sound that is recognizable as music, so if you have no standard at all for the quality of media that you consume and you're into boring G.G. ALLIN hero-worship, then you would totally love this piece of shit. (HD)
(Scarey)

**BUNNY'S A SWINE – "Nothing Bad Will Happen" CD**

Not sure if this is reviewable here. Nothing about it sounds punk, even in really broad terms. It's just really dreary indie-pop. Slow and sleepy, maybe influenced by the likes of GUIDED BY VOICES or something. (FS)
(self-released)

**BURNING LOVE – "Don't Ever Change/Jack the Ripper"**

This is a new record/band on Deranged featuring a dude from LEFT FOR DEAD and RUINATION. Before I say anything else I just want to qualify it by saying this is really not my thing. It's pretty straightforward, catchy rock with punk influences and it strikes me as being pretty vanilla and not gritty or even very punk—the production attempts to evoke some grit but unfortunately the songwriting/playing style of the band is pretty indie rock-ish to my ears. I guess it's just a more "indie punk" style. There's a NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS cover that's done well, but the angularity and darkness of it is again overpowered by emphasis on tight, solid delivery rather than the creation of a mood. The vocals remind me of HOT WATER MUSIC more than NICK CAVE. The cover of the record is a flannel shirt with a VOID pin (amongst other bands) on it. If you're into catchy, danceable punk than this is for you! If you're mostly into death crust noisy hardcore raw metal punk, you probably won't dig it much. (DB)
(Deranged)

**BURNING LOVE – "Don't Ever Change/Jack the Ripper"**

This is rock'n'fuckin'roll, my friends. Straight up. I know the members have some punk roots, but man, this is not punk—this is rock, heavy and sweet. The latest from Deranged Records, BURNING LOVE is an Ontario band that is definitely in the rawk-for-punks vein: gritty vocals with a crustier edge, but with the music in the QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE family to back it up. It's sort of FUCKED UP in reverse, while still using that "mysterious-guy HC" imagery manipulation that to me is too postmodern to even be postmodern. You are not always smarter than your audience, lads, and not to be too existential, but sometimes shit doesn't mean anything at all. The lyrics to "Don't Ever Change" are interesting, but I hope that the band doesn't take themselves too seriously, falling prey to the same situation they critique—are you stuck in nostalgia or a parody of yourself? BURNING LOVE is touring with COLISEUM, which totally makes sense, but they could easily share a stage with RED FANG or KYLESA. The B-side to this is a rad NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS cover. Being a fan of rock, punk and kick ass music in general, I am into it. (MB)
(Deranged)

**BURNING YELLOWS – "Urinal Cakes/Drought"**

Another band of muzzy, messy guitar fuzz with dreamy girl vocals submerged in the somehow genteel feedback... When I first listened to this I got a severe case of the DUM DUM GIRLS, but soon realized that it pertained more to the gritty tuneful collapse of bands like EAT SKULL and PSYCHEDELIC HORSESHIT. My initial assumption was probably due to the fact that the vocals have that dreamy SHOP ASSISTANTS feel that is so popular post Brooklyn Girl Group Revolution Style Now (not that I am complaining...) but the music is more deconstructed, one-note intonation than reverential to early Creation records sounds. They are from the Northwest, and thus have some Portland gloom—in fact, this ultimately reminded me of the FRUMPIES slower ballad-y songs. Which is to say, I liked this the more I listened to it. (LG)
(Hozac)

**BURNT CROSS – "Brian Haw" EP**

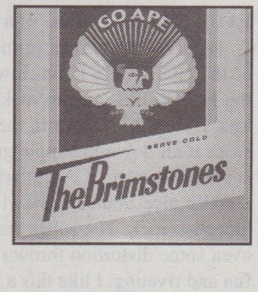
A US re-press of this Brighton, England duo's third EP that was issued in very limited quantity in the UK in 2008. BURNT CROSS is one of the current strongest bearers of the UK anarcho punk tradition à la SUBHUMANS, CONFLICT and CRASS, and this four-song EP showcases the basic, stripped-down music that frames their anarcho-punk rants delivered in a thick UK accent. What's hilarious is the accent and language that was spread all around the world by the Empire where the sun never sets sounds *perfect* for ripping the British government to pieces with lyrical condemnation 200 or so years later. The long lyrical rants just don't have the same bite spit out in Californian "yeah dude" or a Southern drawl, which explains why still to this day there are bands from Encinitas or Corona singing in UK accents. The great, heavily accented vocalist here adds considerable force to lyrics about police treatment of war protestor Brian Haw, the (formerly) current UK government under Gordon Brown and environmental destruction. The music is at first listen somewhat simple mid-tempo anarcho punk, but the simplicity masks its underlying creativity, making for an ace EP. (KS)
(Loud Punk)

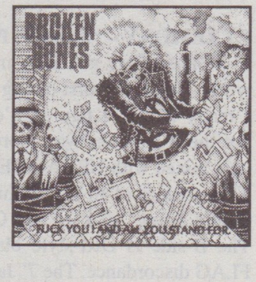
**CAMERA SILENS – "Réalité" LP**

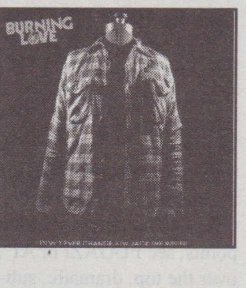
This is a reissue of the 1985 album by this classic and legendary French punk band. I had first heard of them because the song "Pour La Gloire" was covered by a Québécois band called BANLIEU ROUGE way back in the early '90s and I loved it! Even though CAMERA SILENS were a punk band and not a "skinhead" band per se, I know that they have been very popular with that crowd due to the heavy and angry sound of the music and lyrics, and they sound pretty much exactly like a French version of something that would have been released on No Future or Riot City back in the day!! Rrom the driving rhythm of the bass and drums, the guitar sound and the massively aggressive gang vocals, everything about this is this top-notch!! (ML)
(Euthanasie)

**CANADIAN RIFLE – "Facts" EP**

This is the first EP since their debut full-length that I believe came out last summer. It appears to be a single, with one solid A-side and a couple on the B-side that aren't necessarily bad, but they don't really stand up to the main track. If you are unfamiliar with this band, while they have a strong Midwest vibe; the LEATHERFACE influence is more prominent than anything else (read: gruff vocals and thick but somewhat jangly guitars). (BD)
(Residue)





**PAUL CARY – "Ghost of a Man" LP**

PAUL CARY is the former guitarist and vocalist of the HORRORS (from Iowa). I love all that noise the HORRORS used to make. But that was a while ago. Here CARY goes in the opposite direction and strips it all down to simple guitar, bass and drums. It is really fantastic. CARY has an amazing voice with a really nice Southern drawl. The music is garage-y blues-ish rock. The songs are fast-paced and there is even some distortion thrown in on a few. It's catchy, fun and riveting. I like this a lot. (CK)
(Stankhouse)

**CEREMONY – "Rohnert Park" EP**

Rohnert Park is a hole, trust me, I was there last week. This is my first outing with CEREMONY and I really like it. I figured it'd be modern chug-core but the A side has way more BLACK FLAG darkness mixed with NEGATIVE APPROACH hardcore. They are sick of all kindsa shit which I can get behind except being "sick of the CRO-MAGS"...never!!! The B-side is DRI-style blasts with later BLACK FLAG discordance. The 7" lasted about two minutes. (TB)
(Bridge Nine)

**CHEMICALS – "Bubble City" EP**

This is one of those records where you wish the lyrics were not this comprehensible. I guess harvesting electricity from Niagara Falls, drinking peppermint schnapps and playing with brains could be considered acceptable subjects for punk rock songs, but in this case it just seems more stupid than usual. The music is standard fare punk. 1-2-3-4. (CK)
(Sonic Jett)

**CHILD BITE – "The Living, Breathing Organ Summer" CD**

Elaborate, intricate post-punk here, with frequent trespasses into math-rock territory. The guitars play against each other in time to skittish drum patterns, deflecting bursts of synth and occasional saxamaphone. The whole sound seems to be a general thumbing-of-the-nose at predictability, but that brave experimentation often comes at the expense of anything resembling a memorable hook. For reference points, see FUGAZI or AT THE DRIVE-IN, but with over the top, dramatic, sub-NICK CAVE vocals. Not something that grabs one on first listen, but the kind of album that could bear fruit with successive spins. (AM)
(Joyful Noise)

**CHILDREN OF TECHNOLOGY – "It's Time to Face the Doomsday" LP**

*Fuck yes!!!* These Italian motörcharged speed crust bastards are back with their first fucking full-length, and it's a rager! Prepare to have your eardrums annihilated by a full-out nuclear-powered metal-punk onslaught the likes of which you've never heard! Take equal parts MOTÖRHEAD, DISCHARGE, VENOM, ENGLISH DOGS, CARNIVORE, BULLDOZER and DEVIATED INSTINCT, mix well, garnish liberally with patches, bullet-belts, denim vests and liberty spikes, top with an Italian accent and voila—you've got CHILDREN OF TECHNOLOGY! Some of you are probably familiar with these fuckers from their demo, EPs or splits with G.AT.E.S, BASTARDATOR and CANCER SPREADING, all of which were absolutely killer, but this LP beats 'em all hands down! This thick slab of vinyl features eight tracks, each deadlier than the last. Read these lines: "Silence around / This is the sound / Apocalypse: try to resist! / Screams from the earth!!! / Screams from the planet earth!!! / We are the riders of dust / We are the legions of crust / Respecting no-one in this war / Collecting skulls and bones." Fuck yes! This LP doesn't stop kicking your ass for a second—order it now! (VX, in tribute to BR—R.I.P.)
(Agipunk)

**CHILDREN OF TECHNOLOGY – "It's Time to Face the Doomsday" LP**

"We are the riders of dust / We are the legions of crust" belted out with boisterous, gruff vocals and searing guitar solos. Tagging "motörcharged" onto their record and with glamour shots of the band in full crust regalia, this is thundering metal punk two steps off of CELTIC FROST, but sadly not too steps close enough. Metal punk à la BLUDWULF or INEPSY, solid in adherence to its stated influences but silly in the same way as cartoony fashion punk, where (like elements of the Japanese punk scene) fashion becomes the meaning as opposed to the meaning dictating the fashion. Mainstream pop star LADY GAGA can appropriate that shit in a New York minute, so it really then becomes about nothing more than vague fantasy lyrics about the apocalypse. When influences are worn so blatantly on the sleeve it creates a conundrum where 20 years from now when you're boiling your own piss to survive in the apocalyptic wasteland, there will be little energy to revolve these flat pieces of sound-encoded plastic around, but a faint distilled memory will remember DISCHARGE and MOTÖRHEAD as things from when times were better and you weren't forced to eat uncooked canned dog food and knit your own clothes, and this will recede into the background. What band wants that? Make up your own thing. CHILDREN OF TECHNOLOGY are fun enough and probably a kick live; fans of the music and fashion style will probably heavily dig, but I'll save my money for stockpiling MREs and ammo. (KS)
(Agipunk)

**CHIN CHIN – "Sound of the Westway" LP**

Originally released on the band's own Farmer Records in 1985, *Sound of the Westway* was the first LP from Swiss all-female band, CHIN CHIN. Re-mastered with new artwork, the pop album is a snapshot of an indie-pop era during one of its richest moments. The trio's sound existed somewhere between KLEENEX and HOLLY AND THE ITALIANS resulting in to-the-point, basic, melodic pop songs backed by a pleasant wall of sound. Forthcoming and energetic, it's an exciting record that exists as a remarkable, perfect indie-pop gem, and the sound here is absolutely part of a specific time and place. And while that sound holds up beautifully, it should be left as a time capsule. That's not at all a diss, but more an acknowledgement of the importance of a certain insularity in pop culture—*Sound of the West* is actually about as (not-so) fresh as the incredible HOLLY AND THE ITALIANS *Right to Be Italian* record. Which is peculiar, because so many semi-popular bands these days are trying to emulate this full girl-pop sound, even though all of them sound a bit lost in space and dated. CHIN CHIN and their record are about a specific, exciting moment in history, and not many can touch that. (AL)
(Mississippi / Slumberland)

**CIRCLE ONE – "Patterns of Force" LP**

Well-done reissue of this band's 1983 LP. Well, it would be well done if it were anything close to a good record. Even when I was a skinheaded hardcore hunk I didn't like these guys that much. It's got those shitty LA spoken (yet occasionally near-operatic) reverbed vocals and one-chord snoozetunes, plus a couple of funny tracks that I'm sure were meant to be dead serious. The only memorable thing about this band was scary singer John Macias' insane Christianity. I say insane because of course you have to be absolutely nuts to think for a second you can be a punk and a Christian (see that weird "punk church" scene that doesn't have to do with the rest of the movie in *Another State of Mind* for a glimpse of Macias' bizarre ideas), and because he was also legitimately insane. In the late '80s he pushed an old lady off a pier in Santa Monica and was shot to death by the cops. All that would be a lot cooler if CIRCLE ONE wrote a song that I could remember five seconds after hearing it. Actually, wait, these guys actually have reformed with a different singer and if I remember correctly, the actual coolest thing they've done is play a show with WARKRIME. (BB)
(Mass Media / Puke N Vomit)

**CIRCLE PIT – "Total Waste/Everybody Left"**

This is danger driving at night through the desert—the kids from KIOSK grew up, took some acid, got real tough and studied hard on the ways of American rock and roll. Not as chopped up and confused as ROYAL TRUX but fully not the straight-aheadness of the dirtier moments of ROLLING STONES. These kids get dropped in the same pocket as the likes of PINK REASON and PSYCHEDLIC HORSEHIT which isn't surprising but they're closer to the mad destruction of PUSSY GALORE's more together moments. I'm definitely excited. (MM)
(R.I.P. Society)

**THE CLASS ASSASSINS – "You've Got It All Wrong" CD**

Oh, how I wanted to like this... I have been a fan of the CLASS ASSASSINS' past releases and I was honestly surprised to see a new one from them as to my knowledge it has been years since their last record, so I had assumed that they had packed it in. Guess not, but maybe they should have upon listening to this CD. It pains me to say it, but there just isn't the energy or urgency in this "punk rock" that there should be, coming from a band with a name that suggests social unrest by way of killing off classism, and being on a label like Insurgence who proudly and fiercely push "lefty" idealogy with everything they do. I hate to say it, but this just sounded a little like some kind of second-rate SOUL ASYLUM to me—basically easy-listening music by "punk rock" standards... Sorry, guys. (ML)
(Insurgence)

**THE CLASS WAR KIDS – "Reflection! Rage! Rebellion!" CD**

Not since PROPAGANDHI's first couple of full-lengths has a band managed to combine so seamlessly raging politics, ridiculously catchy, infectious sing-along melodic punk and a sense of humor. As well as the aforementioned Canadians, they tip more than a nod musically to SCREECHING WEASEL, an amped-up LAWRENCE ARMS and MORAL CRUX. Politically charged dissent at its most gloriously catchy and rocking. Undoubtedly a standout release from 2009, and any year, really. For real. No surprises of course, that they're Canadian. (RK)
(Rebel Time)

**CONVERSIONS – "Spineless Wonders" LP**

Holy shit! This record destroys! Super noisy hardcore with extremely vicious vocals. Their music flirts with several different styles of hardcore throughout, and every last song is a total rager. It feels like each instrument is just creating chaos, but when put together they turn into this devastating fast and heavy work of genius. Unfortunately, this is a posthumous release; the band broke up a year or two ago after obliterating the Boston area for years. Not much time spent on making the insert, but the cool screen-printed covers makes up for it. Live the chaos and track down this record! (FS)
(Ride the Snake)

**COUGHING FIT – "Getting Natural" EP**

Having grown up on the East Coast I've spent a fair amount of time in Upstate New York, and I never found Albany all that appealing; it seemed like a city that was just sort of *there*, with no outstanding characteristics to speak of. As I've grown up, however, I've learned that there is definitely *something* going on in Albany. Maybe it's something in the water, or possibly it's just a reaction to life in a small city that happens to be the state capital, but they've produced far more than their fair share of amazing hardcore bands: MONSTER X, DEVOID OF FAITH, HAIL MARY, POLICE LINE, BY THE THROAT… hell, even the singer of fucking LIFE'S BLOOD came from this unassuming city. Now you can add COUGHING FIT to that list. This pissed-off straight edge unit manages to cram fourteen originals and two covers, of PROJECT X and SIEGE, on a 45 RPM 7", and every one of them is a killer. The choice of covers gives you a pretty good idea of the band's sound: fast, heavy, pissed-off and violent. No guitar solos, no slow jams, no wannabe rock'n'roll, just raw aggression pressed to vinyl. If this doesn't make you want to move there's something wrong with you. (VX)
(Harvest King)

**CROW – "Bloody Tear" LP**

This is an absolutely mandatory reissue of Japanese hardcore legends CROW's out-of-print 2005 masterpiece. If you didn't get this album the first time around, don't sleep on it now; these are sure to go quick. For those unlucky few who may be unfamiliar with the band, CROW has been going strong since the mid-'80s and play their own distinct no-slow-all-go blend of hardcore and crust metal, like the bastard son of GAUZE and AMEBIX. This record features some of the best songs of their nearly 25-year career, including the anthemic "Give Up All Hope." *Bloody Tear* stands as a monument a band who have actually gotten better as they age instead of descending into embarrassing self-parody like so many others. How many hardcore/punk bands can you think of that have released new records this far into their careers that not only match, but actually surpass their earlier material? Not many, that's for sure. By the time this issue makes it to print CROW will have devastated American shores with four shows in California and two in Texas. If you had a chance to go to one or more of these and passed it up, then there's probably no hope for you. (VX)
(Prank)

**CÜLO – "Nuke Abuse" EP**

I got CÜLO's demo a few months back, and I blasted it pretty regular for while—shit was good, like *real* good—so color me stoked on this new sky-blue slab from the kids at Punks Before Profits. Snotty hardcore punk from Chicago, CÜLO is fucking frustrated and totally pissed—two ingredients in the perfect punk cocktail. Early DC comes out in the guitars, but the lyrics are all Midwest hopelessness ("When people die it's no great loss") and when "I'm a Mutant" kicks in, the rage is unmistakable. There is no low-end on the record at all, as CÜLO are a bass-free four-piece and make no attempt to compensate for the conspicuous absence of a four-stringed rhythm maker… On the demo this didn't really matter—everything was noisy and blown-out, and it kinda make me a little more anxious (a good thing)—but here the guitars are slightly less fucked-up sounding and I find myself missing that bass. But it's OK, I just sang along instead. Fukkn great stripped-down punk. My advice to CÜLO: get a bass player, and fewer dick photos on your next layout—you guys are sexy and all, but I think I'm good for a few releases. My advice to you: get this EP. (WN)
(Punks Before Profits)

**CULTURE KIDS – "Drop Off the Block" EP**

Bay Area hardcore band that has enough snot on this six-song EP to make it stand out from the crowd. This type of lo-fi recording saves bands such as this one from being too damn generic sounding. Cool guitar work and the vocals make this fucker pop right off the turntable. I have heard they are great live but have yet to witness a show. Cool EP. (MS)
(self-released)

**DAWN OF WOLVES / TOMBSTALKER – CD**

TOMBSTALKER starts of the CD with some killer blackened death metal punk, not unlike ORDER OF THE VULTURE. Unlike that band though, TOMBSTALKER has some more melodic death metal parts that don't fully flow with the rest of the songs. The punkish death metal/black metal parts are raging but it would be cool to hear them drop the more technical and melodic sections of songs or at least to transition into them differently. Overall, I really enjoyed their offerings. It brought Swedish bands like AFFLICTED and DISSECTION to mind. DAWN OF WOLVES plays more or less the same style and do so very effectively. The beginning of "Come Forth" is absolutely bad-ass with the "ooohhh" at the beginning of it. The rest of it is good, even the keyboard parts (!), but "Come Forth" is the standout track for me. Good release. (DB)
(Pragmatic)

**DEAD FARMERS – "Go Home" LP**

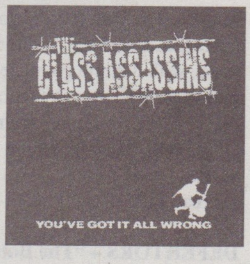
In the same tradition as the MYSTERY GIRLS, GOODNIGHT LOVING, HORRIBLY WRONG, (to a lesser extent) BRIMSTONE HOWL, APACHE DROPOUT, etc., the DEAD FARMERS deliver fuzzed-out garage that would be best enjoyed while highasfuck. Where these guys fall short is that a lot of the songs follow a *reaallly* similar formula, to the point where you can pick up the needle, put it just about anywhere else on the record and it all sounds like the same song, or one really long fucking jam. (IS)
(R.I.P. Society)

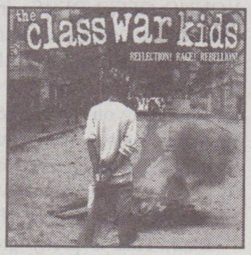
**DEAD FRIENDS – LP**

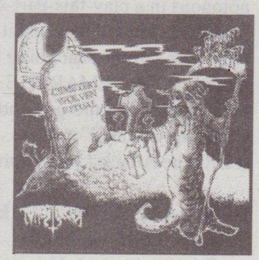
I've known of this band for a li'l bit now, and never having heard any of their material, I was interested to say the least. The name sounded awesome and their affiliation with Drugged Conscience and a whole new crop of rad Flaridah bands was intriguing. DEAD FRIENDS have released a slew of tapes already, along with an EP, I think, and now this beautifully packaged full-length. The art is outstanding—a disturbing yet eye-catching screen on fold-over heavy cardstock, a cool lyric booklet with not enough information in it and a sweet vinyl sticker with a man bleeding. Prepare for the bummer: it's not a raging hardcore record. All the imagery and indicators pointed toward "off yer hinges HC!!" but we end up with a straightforward punk record. This release even ends up a little tame for my taste, a punk record with (unavoidable?) No Idea/G-ville melody and shades of heart-on-sleeve, galloping rock. I feel like that sounds bad—it's not; the record is very good, just a bit different than expected. Members of ASSHOLE PARADE (f-yeah!) and RELIGIOUS AS FUCK. (RM)
(Drugged Conscience / Pure Pain Sugar)

**THE DEAD SPACE – "Journalism/Peter Hates Us"**

These guys got on the bus on Guadalupe and didn't get off 'til Salford. It always surprises me to hear a band like this coming from a town like Austin… the eternal sunshine and laid-back hippie vibe seems like the antithesis of the depressive, dark post-punk that the DEAD SPACE trade in. Like, you can understand how JOY DIVISION or SECTION 25 came from grey, rainy



Manchester. Still, the sun goes down eventually, even in Austin, and this is music for 2:00 A.M. Sparse and tense, with definite gothic tendencies. There's a slight radio-friendly edge to their sound, maybe in the choruses, but it's a far cry from the cheesy U2-via-JOY DIVISION radio pabulum of INTERPOL or EDITORS. (AM)
(Thread Pull)

**DEFEKTORS – "The Bottom of the City" LP**
To these ears, Vancouver's DEFEKTORS kayak some of the same rapids as San Francisco locals YOUNG OFFENDERS: driving, atmospheric punk with scratchy, pointed guitar barbs. Elements of HOT SNAKES and the WIPERS dominate, with vocals that remind me of the guy from CIRCUS LUPUS. The last song on the record, "Burning Light," is an epic longer jam—their "Youth of America"? (AM)
(Nominal / Grotesque Modern)

**DEMARCHE – "Maybe Tomorrow" EP**
Man. This is pretty great. I'm hearing UK82, some ANTI-CIMEX, MOTÖRHEAD and STATE OF FEAR (only a little) here. The songs are real monotonous in a play-this-part-sixteen-times-change-repeat-twice kind of way and it's better for that. It's like there's one drum-beat going thru the entire four-song record. What DEMARCHE loses on creativity they make up for in pure grit and grime. This is an awesome, ugly punk 7". (JU)
(Hardcore Attack / Papagajuv Hlasatel)

**DESOLATE VOID / THE LAST VAN ZANT / THE PARISH – split CD**
Crimes Against Humanity is well known for unleashing metal/crust/grind assaults on welcoming ears for years, and this release is no different. Wisconsin's DESOLATE VOID deliver mid-tempo EYEHATEGOD-like churners like "Reburn" and grinding churners like "Ungrateful Bastard" and "13," but fall flat on their one attempt to combine classic Southern rock and grind...I didn't "Expect the Worst," but I surely got it. South Carolina's THE LAST VAN ZANT nod to their influences with their moniker (LYNYRD SKYNYRD founding frontman Ronnie Van Zant and his brother Johnny, who now handles those duties), and the product is exactly as I expected: down-tuned, whiskey-drenched, stoned and dirty. When they slow it down, they include guitar parts that really set them apart from the throngs of other bands like this ("War All The Time" and "Learning" most notably). Crushing guitars and an oppressive low-end; THE LAST VAN ZANT set a high bar with their name, but I was not let down. Also from Wisconsin, the PARISH might just steal the disc. The personification of "epic," with Southern/SABBATH grooves and a crust delivery that nods heavily in the direction of bands like IRON MONKEY and STORMCROW. "Dark Days" is a ten-minute epic with a middle riff that sounds like it should not have been left on KYLESA's cutting room floor and a flanger-drenched delivery that harkens to the oft-maligned KARMA TO BURN (but man, when they were good, like in '95 when they were a fucking force…but I digress)—a song destined for classic status. When you hand me a three-way metal/crust/grind split CD, my hopes are pretty much at rock bottom, but consider me blown away. Totally great shit. (WN)
(Crimes Against Humanity)

**DEVOUR – "Insect Circuitry" EP**
As soon as I put this record on, I instantly thought of BORN AGAINST. The frontman's gruff yet snotty voice is the main reason for this. It's not that his voice sounds like Sam McPheeters's, they just sing in a similar way. Really, this doesn't sound all that much like BORN AGAINST, although there are some similarities, especially in the guitars on a few songs. This is noisy, mid-paced hardcore, heavy and abrasive and really very good. The lyrics are also very, very good. The topics covered aren't breaking any new ground, but they're exceptionally well written. This is definitely a record worth picking up. (VX)
(Headcount)

**DISCO VIETNAM – "L.I.D.L" EP**
This is a fast '80s-style hardcore band from Berlin, Germany, which is funny cuz they sound like most of the bands from Upstate NY these days. There is some of the goofiness and similar vocal style of ACID REFLUX. Can you imagine a gloomier SOCIAL CIRCKLE with some melodic guitar leads? The breakdowns and song structures are a little more creative than most of the bands of this style, and the angsty feel isn't overdone here. It's got a good quality recording—not too overproduced. I have to say that I don't get the name of this band. Anyway, I know there are tons of people doing this shit right now, but after a few listens, this record is really growing on me. They have something to add to a saturated genre of punk without getting lost in it. (MB)
(Search for Fame)

**DMV – "Butter Pecan" EP**
Two bands come to mind when listening to this: DAG NASTY and HICKEY. Not that DMV really sounds that much like either one, but the vocals on side A really remind me of *Can I Say* and the vocals on side B remind me of some of the slower HICKEY songs. The music, on the other hand, sounds more garage-y. It's a bit twang-y, a bit rockin'. Combine all that stuff together you get some interesting sounds. (CK)
(Stankhouse)

**D9 – CD**
A noisy, feedback-laden combination of powerviolence, grindcore and heavy hardcore. This band sounds really pissed off. You can feel the hate and anger. The band is from Israel and is named after the armored bulldozer used by the Israeli military. The first song has tons of feedback, is slow and heavy and has a sample. It could be a BUZZOV*EN track. Eventually they, well…for a lack of a better way to say it, kick into a full rage. I haven't heard a disc in a while that sounds so full of anger. I think they are singing in Hebrew so we'll have to trust the label when they say they are singing about "industrialization, zionism, anti-militarism, progress, hatred, depression." They remind me a little of a slightly heavier LOOK BACK AND LAUGH but that's not exactly right. Maybe it's just the level of rage. (MH)
(Heart & Crossbone)

**D9 / MONDO GECKO – split CD**
This split highlights two bands from Tel Aviv, Israel. MONDO GECKO plays thrashy good-time hardcore, really upbeat shit like you'd expect from a band that takes its name from a minor *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* character. They didn't really grab me. D9 play some really fucked-up brutal grindcore and are much better. While MONDO GECKO's lyrics are full of silly in-jokes, D9's are studies in despair: "Knowledge is carved in the scars of years / Pain is experience / I saw him hanging by his fucking throat in his fucking closet." Get this for the seven D9 tracks. I'll be keeping my eyes peeled for more of their releases, because this shit is good. (VX)
(Urban Decay / Zas / To Live a Lie / Twintoe)

**DOOM – "Lost the Fight/Pro-Life Control Sessions" LP**
Memories, memories… This is a re-ish of some class mid-period DOOM, combining the hard-to-find split with SELFISH (the only DOOM record I need) and the classic split with HIATUS that Flat Earth put out. I love DOOM, love them. I'll admit that my faves are *Fuck Peaceville* and *War Crimes*, but all their shit is pure classic UK crustcore. Blasting the Swedish sounds of ANTI CIMEX through the EXTREME NOISE TERROR UK stenchcore blender. Dreads, dogs and passed out crusties. Memories, memories… Loooooove it. (TB)
(Agipunk)

**DOOM HAWK – LP**
If the reviewer finds her/himself confused, please look to the note included with this fine DIY release: "This is Olympia punks playing Queer Fantasy Metal," and indeed that is exactly what DOOM HAWK is. Maybe these galloping rhythms aren't punk per se, and certainly the ten-minute songs with soaring keyboards and a chorus of backing vocals are more associated with epic metal, but there is a cartoon aspect to the approach that metalheads would certainly eschew (take the carnival tempo and tuba-delivered bassline to "Primal Cure" for example), and As I flip the record I have no doubt the DOOM HAWK are punks. For musical comparisons I am at a loss, but take the same theatrical aspects of WORLD/INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY and add in the gypsy music that those dirt-encrusted traveler kids play on the corner, and then make it all real lo-fi metal. Like the kinda disco/party/fantasy metal that my friend played me on a recent trip and I couldn't stop laughing but grudgingly admitted that I liked it. There are too many musical elements here to describe, but if you are still reading and find yourself somehow still interested after all of my ramblings, then I'll give this one last go: DOOM HAWK are equal parts WORLD/INFERNO, ANDREW W.K., CRADLE OF FILTH and LEFTOVER CRACK, and will lull you into enjoyment whether you want to like them or not. Whether perplexed or fascinated, angered or endeared, you will at least *listen*, and that in and of itself is an accomplishment. (WN)
(Rumbletowne)

**DRI – "Crossover" LP**
What can be said about *thee* album, the iconic (and aptly titled) crossover record? The metallic DRI guy on the cover and the longer, sorta slower, slightly more elaborate tunes were an obvious progression for these speed freaks. The constant blitzkrieg of aggression and riffage on *Dealing With It* (Mikey Offender on bass!), personal fave *Violent Pacification* and the *Dirty Rotten* release take a backseat to dominant guitar work on this album. This 1987 classic is more similar to *Hell Awaits* than *Millions of Dead Cops*, but the attitude, more than anything, saves it from falling totally into the metal category. DRI's thrashing drums and punk undertones shine through, defining the band as an anomaly and torchbearer of the burgeoning crossover scene. More than the music itself, Kurt Bretch's vocals stay true to the gnar skate thrash sound he helped define on those early records. He

continues to include social commentary in his lyrics, no matter how overt or, at times, humorous. The music, as well, is played with a familiarity and noticeable abandon. If you are unfamiliar with the band or this record, let me fill you in—it is absolutely essential listening if you have: a skateboard, a bong, a SLAYER record, high-tops, or long hair. Lucky for you, Beer City Records is in the middle of reissuing the entire back catalog of DRI, complete with tons of extras and goodies on the digital copies! Pick it up! (RM)
(Beer City)

**DUCHESS SAYS / RED MASS – split 45**

Electro-punk that wanders a bit too deep into the synth-y/metal woods for my tastes. DUCHESS SAYS sounds a little like what the LOST SOUNDS might've like if they'd been (more) unhinged from their punk roots. And RED MASS, man, while I dug the 12", this is just too…goth-metal. Bah. (IS)
(Alien8)

**DULL – "Dinamite" CD**

Sometimes bands make it too easy for reviewers. Naming your band DULL takes all the fun out of it, especially when you play an absolutely god-fucking-awful mix of ska, "punk," pop and whatever garbage you feel like tossing into the mix. This makes me want to punch myself in the face until I can't feel anymore, and not in a good way. (VX)
(Hurricane Shiva)

**DURESS – "Indifference" EP**

First off, DURESS get instant bonus points from me for having the words "Straightedge. Fuck you." on the cover of their record. As someone who is both straight edge and inclined towards unreasoning hostility towards people I've never met, I liked that quite a bit. Fortunately their music lives up to the high expectations these words inspired. DURESS plays an unyielding, chunky style of hardcore, mixing elements of youth crew with thrash and heavy breakdowns. They write songs about hatred for their fellow man, preferring suicide to drug use, and generally negative emotions. Their songs mostly range from 15 to 43 seconds long, although they do close the second side with an absolutely epic track clocking in at 1:39. This is the kind of record that leaves you sweating, bruised and wanting more. (VX)
(Underestimated)

**EVERYBODY OUT – CD**

Street-punk-infused Oi that has decided to stick firmly to the punks and skins rulebook. It's cooked with all the right ingredients, executed to annoying perfection and soaked in a big bathtub of generic blandness. Here comes the ska bit and there goes your CD flying towards the freebie bin. (SD)
(Taang)

**FAITH CITY FIASCO – "The Nothing" CD**

Jesus-fucking-Christ this sucks. Sounds like one of the innumerable Man's Ruin releases that came out and was promptly forgotten two days later. I'm not sure how it could be achieved, but if y'all could kindly take your fake Sailor Jerry font and shove it straight up your ass I would be much obliged. I literally have the next record cued up on the turntable in readiness for the moment that I completely lose patience with this shit and give up. Done. How the fuck does this shit have a barcode but no label contact info? (AU)
(self-released)

**FAT BEAVERS – "Still Don't Know What to Do" LP**

This is pretty good trebly post-peace-punk (can I say that?—yes, I can) from France. It is rumored that, as English isn't their first language, they "didn't know" what the words "fat" and "beaver" mean together. After listening to the album and becoming confident that they have a grasp of the English language that is more functional than a lot of my friends', I have to say that this *definitely not true*. They know that their name means *chubby pussies*. So. Whatever. The content of the songs joins the chorus of middle-class punks resisting middle-class jobs and falling off the cliff into yuppiedom. I can't decide if that's weird and alienating or not. You can be the judge. I feel bummed about how shallow the vocals are—they're too tinny to fit with the rich sound of most of the songs, except for on the track "Killjoy Superstar," which is an excellent chanty track that reminds me a lot of FUGAZI. Unfortunately, as with many overtly political bands, they get a little bit corny and start singing about how much they like riding bikes. Fortunately, they recover with "Lovesick," a beautiful extended metaphor involving the sickeningly erotic nature of advertising. In irrelevant conclusion, they remind me a bit of BLATZ and the VASELINES. (HD)
(Build Me a Bomb)

**FELLOW PROJECT / THOUSANDAIRIES – split EP**

We got here a split 7" from new poppy-ish New York bands. FELLOW PROJECT has a subtle similarity to many other Northeast pop/emo bands; the kind of sound the MEASURE [S.A.] is known for. But they play faster and a bit more raw, at least on the first of two songs. The other is a slow jam. They are comparable to VENA CAVA. As for THOUSANDAIRES, they do straight-up fast pop-punk with super noodly guitar riffs. Talking about guitar riffs, you know when a band has a stellar riff, and then the follow-through riff totally goes against the grain of the song? It feels weird, like this kick-ass song keeps getting interrupted… well, that's how the song "High-Fived in Effigy" feels. And yes, that is the real name. Yikes. This band could be really good if they wrote songs that flowed well from beginning to end and laid off the guitar noodling. (FS)
(Kiss of Death)

**FEMURS – "Honeymoon" CD**

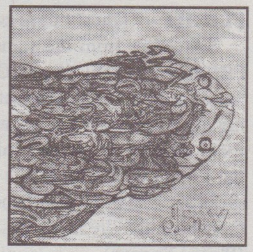
Acoustic indie rock that borders on pop-punk for a minute or two. A one-man band that is only OK. When you turn down the distortion you'd better get deep or else buy some friends some pizza to get them to play in your band for a session or two to liven it up. (RL)
(self-released)

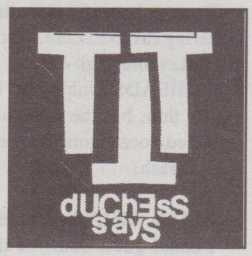
**THE FIALKY – "Boys Side/Girls Side" EP**

Aside from not having a clue what these guys are singing about, they rock! The FIALKY are a Czech band that is rocking the "77 punk" sound with flair—crisp, crunchy guitars played at a frenetic pace with sharp, staccato bass and drums accompanied by snarling vocals backed up by lots of whoa-oh choruses! Lucky for me there is a nice big poster insert that includes not only lots of cool pictures, but both Czech *and* English versions of the song lyrics. Overall though, punk is pretty universal and the message behind the music is consistent with songs covering topics of being true to yourself and staying loyal to the scene, etc. Six songs in total are crammed on this 45 RPM EP, so it's a pretty good bang for your buck with this one! (ML)
(Papagajuv Hlasatel)

**FIX MY HEAD / KNIFE IN THE LEG – split LP**

FIX MY HEAD is a bunch of Bay Area hardcore stalwarts (read, ex-members of…) playing a classic style that recalls peers like DEADFALL, STRUNG UP and FUNERAL SHOCK. Classic lyrics about being pissed the fuck off, both in the macro (Bush administration) and micro (Mission hipsters) senses. Nothing complicated, just meat-and-potatoes hardcore for kids of any age. KNIFE IN THE LEG from Poland brings a slightly more melodic attack but retains the anger. There are bits that remind me of early SCREW 32, but the fundamental sensibility is old school hardcore. *Love* the lyrics to "Pervert Haters" that attack homophobia from a unique angle (plus it's a ripping tune!). I know you meant it ironically, but the chorus to "Kill/Die for Limited Edition" could be my battle cry. Sorry dudes, but I'm totally that guy. P.S. I can't help but notice that this record comes in both black and color vinyl versions. (AU)
(Inimical)





**FLIGHT – "Ghosts/Crackerjack Woman"**
Spawning from the same asshole that begat the FRESH AND ONLYS and OH SEES, these Midwest "men" deliver two songs that I don't remember ordering, do you? Don't get me wrong—I'm glad "garage rock" doesn't necessarily mean the DEVIL DOGS, but I don't want to feel like I just sucked a thousand dicks after hearing your band, you know? I hope, for their sake, they're nice guys. (BB)
(Plastic Spoons)

**FLIPOUT A.A. – "Flipout Song" CD**
Ex-members of L.I.E. throw down ten tracks of blistering fast 625-core. Not unlike their past efforts, this takes the high-energy spazz of JELLYROLL-ROCKHEADS with some blastbeats. The music is a little thin, but the frenetic pace and high-pitched, strangled vocals gots me hooked. (TB)
(625 Thrash)

**FRESH & ONLYS – "Vanishing Cream/Cloud 9"**
I could guess some of the pills (or small square tabs) that these folks like to consume in order to heavily inform their psychedelic excursions, but something else must be giving the FRESH & ONLYS the gift of productivity because this band is unstoppable. Maybe it's just an absolute love of music? Lots of coffee and illegal substances? Whatever it is, I want some. This single would serve as a good teaser for anyone unfamiliar with the band, though I sort of lean towards full-length albums with this type of stuff. The title track is a dreamy, electrified acoustic number that comes off a bit like the CHURCH and has cool lyrics to kick back and drift away with. The flip is more of an upbeat rocker that immediately brings to mind the awesome British BARRACUDAS. Both of these songs are wonderful, and those who dig the psych revival stuff need to check this band out 'cause they blow away many of other contenders. (BG)
(Plastic Spoons)

**FRIDAY NIGHT SISSY FIGHT – "The Dorothy Mantooth" CD EP**
Lots of lyrics about the scene, the lack of women in the scene, and being positive and stuff like that. Lots of mixed messages that really got me going. Moaning the lack of women while being a sexist asshole might have something to do with it, but mebbe that's just old-fashioned in these days of ironic hipster cool. The band luckily supports the cruelty-free lifestyle and PETA. Very strangely (or perhaps not), as an Israeli band, they don't seem to extend the cruelty-free lifestyle to the indigenous peoples of the land they currently occupy/have settled. No irony, or scene problems there, obviously. The music? Fairly basic '80s bandana thrash. (RK)

**FROM ASHES RISE – "Live Hell" LP**
So this is a live recording that I heard is meant to fulfill some contractual obligations the band had with Jade Tree. The sound is pretty good, as is all the playing. I recall enjoying some of their records. *Concrete and Steel* was my jam. Listening to FROM ASHES RISE now, the style is not that appealing to me. Along with bands like REMAINS OF THE DAY, they had sort of an emo-crust thing going on and were certainly vanguards of that (non-existent?) genre. I'm sure there are some die-hard fans out there who'd want a live recording. So if that's you then this is your jam! (DB)
(Jade Tree)

**GEORGIANA STARLINGTON / WILD CHOIR – split EP**
The GEORGIANA STARLINGTON side is a laid-back blues garage wander, drunken-nights-alone-in-a-deserted-bar-type sound, but not sad and bleak like that, just kind of country-song-style longing. WILD CHOIR sounds like SHANNON AND THE CLAMS but with a dude singing. It's cool, I guess. (MM)
(Rob's House)

**GERM ATTAK – "Cruxshadow" LP/CD**
Intro song is a great track that flings you into this UK82-induced record. We're talking PARTISANS and ABRASIVE WHEELS sounding shit here. GERM ATTAK has been working at this for some time now and manages to pull the sound off just fine. Standout tunes are "Life in Exile" and "Mercenaries on the Attack." This LP is sure to get you pogoing if that is your thing. Who's to say? It got Layla Gibbon soaping and spiking her hair up. (MS)
(LP: Loud Punk / CD: Drunk With Power)

**GERM ATTAK – "Death to Cops" EP**
I'd never investigated this band, having read many interviews but being bummed on too many dull-ass pogo/glue sniffin' UK82 bands. Well fuck me 'cuz this record is pretty strong. First off, the recording is ideal—raw and tough, vocals just audible through the perfectly mixed instruments. The four songs deal with state repression, from larger US/Canadian agencies to a guy killed in custody by local cops. Side two is the winner for me, with a pair of driving, catchy, pissed-off numbers. The tracks on the first side are a touch more drawn-out, though none of it ranges far from rough, bouncy, sing/yell-along, timeless, grubby punk. If you need one, this would be a fine introduction to these disgruntled Canadians. (JM)
(Loud Punk)

**GOD EQUALS GENOCIDE / NO PEOPLE – split EP**
I don't think these recordings were made in the same place, but they sound like it. Los Angeles's GOD EQUALS GENOCIDE have a fuzzed-over, barely distorted guitar sound, male and female vocals, and simple, catchy, fast songs that would be totally fun to sing along with. This is perfect living room show music, not too far off from SF's FUCKING BUCKAROOS. Tokyo's NO PEOPLE sound real similar—a little poppier, with a cute organ (uh, I mean $3 keyboard), like on my favorite INGE VAL track. This record is sweet and will enliven your next dance party. (JM)
(Recess Japan / Underground Government)

**GOVERNMENT ISSUE – "Joy Ride" LP**
A reissue of one of my favorite records from one of my favorite punk bands of all time. What makes this so cool is that it's totally hardcore, but also moving into something new. The debate over their later, more "mature" records will always exist, but there's no denying classics like "4-Wall Hermit," "Time to Escape," "Hall of Fame" and the excellent NANCY SINATRA cover "These Boots Are Made for Walking." Whether you worship at the hardcore altar, or just want to check out a great record by an important band in the history of punk, this is essential. Thanks, Dr. Strange. (JH)

**HALF RATS – "For the Sake of Love/The Girl"**
These cats have totally nailed it—from songwriting to production, this record sounds like it came straight from 1965. It's Mersybeat meets the BEACH BOYS, or the MAKEOUT PARTY going all time machine. The backing harmonies in full effect are mixed with that '60s jangle guitar; I just hope this boys have the haircuts and rags to match. (SD)
(Douchemaster)

**HAMBURGER HELP ME – "Awesome Garys" EP**
Yeah!! This EP has 22 fucking songs on it and it is not grindcore! It's rudimentary punk and it sounds like someone who does not speak English as their first language wrote the words. It's full of energy and ADHD inspiration. This band reminds me of a weird cross between SUPERCHARGER, late BORN AGAINST and CRISPY NUTS. Think about that for a minute. Pretty awesome! (GH)
(Fart, no info)

**HAMMERLOCK – "Let the Bad Times Roll" LP**
This three-piece don't mess around. Rock'n'roll straight to the jugular, with hints of early ZZ TOP, NUGENT, ANTISEEN and a load of MOTÖRHEAD. It's got the chops, it's got the hooks and it's got that Bruce Roehrs seal of approval smeared all over it. This is rock'n'roll played by true rock'n'rollers—it ain't fancy, it ain't politically correct, but it's honest, tough and straight from the heart, which is a hell of lot more than can be said for half the crude being passed of as blue denim hardworking American rock. (SD)
(CMGR)

**HAUNTED GEORGE – "American Crow" LP**
This record starts off with the theme from *Dark Shadows*, which kind of makes me laugh after listening to the rest of it. This record could be the soundtrack to a season of that TV show. The songs tell stories about caskets, crows, buzzards, witches, ghouls, etc. and he is called HAUNTED GEORGE. Maybe it is not just a moniker. HAUNTED GEORGE was formerly Steve Pallow of the BEGUILED and the NECESSARY EVILS. Now he is mostly a one-man band with some extra guitar by JIMMY HOLE and synthesizer by MONTY BUCKLES on this LP. GEORGE sounds evil and possessed. His music is primitive guitar strums and pounding drums. An air of reverb gives it extra twang and otherworldliness. Weird and slightly unsettling. I have a strange desire to mention the full frontal nudity on the inner sleeve too. (CK)
(In the Red)

**HELLSTOMPER / HOOKERS – split EP**
Hmmm… Well, what we got here is HELLSTOMPER from the bustling metropolis of Rock Springs, Georgia, who plays some Southern rock with a punk influence. The song on this split is straight-up country. These guys can probably fight or at least take a good drunken beating, but the tune on this record "Texas (Is a Bust)" is in itself a bust. I would rather listen to HAMMERLOCK, which nails this sound without needing their audience to be their drunken friends. I think these dudes would have fared better if they weren't on a split with a ragingly fast band, and to be fair, this record is total Roehrs-core. It says on the HELLSTOMPER MySpace bio that they have left a "long string of satisfied women behind." Well, boys, I am not one of them. On the other side of this record, we have the Confederacy of Scum brethren HOOKERS from Kentucky. These dudes crank out some tra-

ditional fast hardcore that reminds me of early RAT BASTARDS with a blistering solo and some chant vocals in the mix. Recording bands like this is tricky cuz they tend to sound too polished and lose a lot of the intensity that can only be experienced at a live show, but I do like this sound and even if we probably won't agree on world politics and shit, I would love to drink whiskey with these dudes and deal with the well-earned bangover from what would be an undoubtedly brutal live set, gauntlets and all. (MB)
(Scarey)

**HERE COMES A BIG BLACK CLOUD / TINY KNIVES – split EP**

This split 7" between two Portland bands works really well, complimenting both with enough songs that you get a feel for what each one is about. Desperately cute (but not twee) and foot-thumping, head-boppin' pop music from TINY KNIVES is found on the A-side. The three tracks are all distorted indie rock, landing on the eclectic side of Elephant 6 but reinforced with a more urgent edge than you'd expect from other bands that fall under that umbrella. HERE COMES A BIG BLACK CLOUD's side is thudding tribal, rhythmic, weird punk sounds. Hypnotizing shambles of songs thrown together to make a cohesive, beautiful mess. (AL)
(Stankhouse)

**HGW – "Niech Milcza Tylko Martwi" CD**

These Polish kids start this disc out with straight-up metal for the first few songs, though they have the classic crusty "one screecher, one bellower" dual vocal style. After a bit of this, the hardcore influence starts to appear, and they show some variety in terms of structure and tempo, though nothing outside the bounds of contemporary metallic crust. (They avoid harmonics or super-sludge, thankfully.) The lyrics are in Polish, and English translations are provided. They're outspokenly anti-fascist, and rail against the surveillance state, punks cashing in on bullshit, and humanity in general. The only note of positivity comes from their WPZ cover. These folks execute this shit well enough; even the metal is to the point. I didn't get knocked on my ass, but this is a decent release. (JM)
(Trujaca Fala / Czerwonu Diabelek / Quatuka)

**HGW – "Niech Milcza Tylko Martwi" CD**

Great fast hardcore, but overpowered completely by shredded vocals. This Polish band plays complex (e.g. "modern") hardcore—in that it has stops, starts, breakdowns with double-bass and moody intros, as well as clean, solid recording…but the vocals retain full, blown-vocal-chord screeching howl on all parts. They're wicked sounding, but so completely distracting when the music is setting an alternate mood to build to the throttling hardcore parts that they begin to work against as opposed to with the music. There's not enough variety in the vocals to sustain listening for thirty minutes. Though music-wise it never reaches the chaotic intensity of "screamo," throughout this session of future throat polyps, the lyrics are sung in Polish but translated to reveal cool anti-facist, anti-NSBM, anti-government attacks with bleak Kafka-esque vignettes mixed in. (KS)
(Trujaca Fala / Czerwonu Diabelek / Quatuka)

**HOLD A GRUDGE – "Doing Time" CD**

Following a self-released demo and a full-length, these Montreal skinheads are really coming into their own with this release. A veritable mix of hardcore (in both that AGNOSTIC FRONT sense, and the sing-along melodic 7 SECONDS style), some metallic STRUNG OUT guitaring, and the mandatory Oi chants. While the singing is a little flat at times, the melody, spirit and focused aggressive assault really carry this. Some excellent lead guitar along with suitably left-wing lyrics make this a total winner every time. (RK)
(Insurgence)

**HOLY SHIT! – "KBD OOP" 10"**

With a title like this, I was expecting—what else?—young record nerds attempting a third-rate KBD rip-off. Turns out to be much more hardcore. And I love it! Super catchy songs with a frantic pace, some herky-jerky drumbeats and shouted vocals. DEEP WOUND probably isn't the best comparison (though "Stupid Comic Guy" brings to mind "Video Prick"), but it's definitely got that manic, over-the-top vibe. Also, "Bad Day Fishing" gets my vote for best 27-second song I've heard since I don't know when. Anyways, just get this, it rules. (JH)
(Criminal IQ)

**HOME BLITZ – "Perpetual Night/Murder in My Heart"**

Dammit! I wish I wasn't such a snob about some things, but the production quality on this is just killing me! I'm not sure if it is intentional or not, or if it was something about the recording or the pressing, but there is just too much distortion on this slab o' wax for me to enjoy the incredible-sounding power-pop blasting in my headphones right now!! On one hand, the poor production helps to give it a relatively "retro" feel, but overall it's distracting from the cool, catchy-as-hell music I'm hearing. This sounds a little bit like the POINTED STICKS with a very '80s Anglo influence—lots of killer guitar riffs and keyboards. Hopefully we'll hear more in the future from HOME BLITZ, just with a little less distracting distortion… (ML)
(Almost Ready)

**HOT GUTS – "The Ballad of Jon Simon" EP**

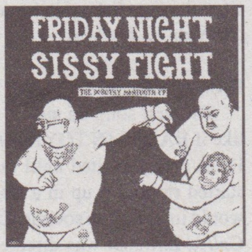
This is the debut record from a Philadelphia trio featuring members of FNU RONNIES. Three songs and all three different from each other. The first sounds like DINOSAUR JR merged with the JESUS AND MARY CHAIN; the second like any band on GSL Records mixed with a little STOOGES towards the end; the third starts with just vocals and drums over a quasi-haunting loop and ends with blown out guitar and drums. It makes for an interesting mix of songs and all are decent but not blowing me away either. (MU)
(Badmaster)

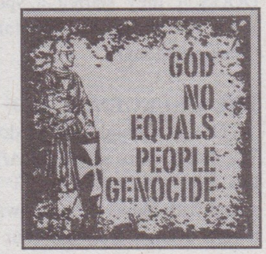
**HOUBA / PUNK FLOID – split CD**

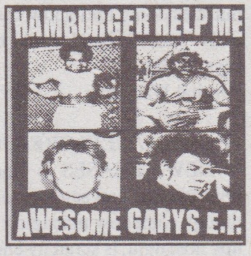
Only today I was sitting at a table outside a Czech pub in downtown San Francisco with Tim Brooks, when the owner's eleven-year-old son attempted to impress us with his mediocre birdcalls and paper airplane skills. Luckily, this was no indication of the level of talent in the population of the Czech Republic as a whole. Both bands on this split more than redeem their country's reputation in my eyes. PUNK FLOID are not, unfortunately, a punk PINK FLOYD cover act, but instead perform fast-paced melodic hardcore along the lines of TEN FOOT POLE. HOUBA, on the other hand, have an even poppier, almost jangly, side. Their sound owes a lot to the DESCENDENTS or ALL. Each band gets five songs. I confess I couldn't understand a word of the lyrics. I have to say that HOUBA came out on top for me: their last song, "Psaly To V Tisku," starts off sounding like the SMALL FACES before settling in to a SNUFF-like pop thrash. Good stuff. (AM)
(Papagajuv Hlasatel)

**RON HOUSE – "Blind Boy in the Backseat" LP**

THOMAS JEFFERSON SLAVE APARTMENTS/GREAT PLAINS/'80s and '90s Columbus punk fan boys (aren't they all boys?) are already familiar with the one RON HOUSE. I'm a little less familiar; I never saw this most intensive of retrospectives coming! Actually I'm a bit blown away by it. This release compiles tapes of his earliest (?) incarnations as the TWISTED SHOUTS and MOSES CARRYOUT circa 1978-1981, and if you recognize the names MIKE REP, TOMMY JAY, or NUDGE SQUIDFISH, well, you probably already own it. Not the kind of stuff that bowls you over, more just understated shambling DIY basement pop goodness. I think people usually think of DIY as a UK phenom, so it's always great to hear some new (old) American sounds. Even better when it's both listenable *and* worthy of repeat spins! (GB)
(Columbus Discount)



**HYGIENE – "Things That Dreams Are Made Of/ Fixed Odds Betting Terminal"**

Thanks to Paco, one of my fave UK bands returns with a super limited Record Store Day 7". On the A-side they murder a HUMAN LEAGUE cover and turn it into some dark CRISIS-esque lo-fi rumble. The flip sounds like some Rough Trade goods from '81—maybe a lost FALL record? Somehow this band manages to harness the falling-apart darkness of post-punk bands before they got signed and got all shiny and polished. It's off-kilter, out-of-tune and unnerving. As good as any band around right now, this will sit at the top of the pile for a while. (TB)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

**IMMATERIAL – "Betty" EP**

The first song on side A is so tough and so bored like if BABES IN TOYLAND were fronted by VIKI. I was pretty excited until the second song on side A started ripping it up in a way that sounds like how I would imagine the soundtrack to an episode of *My So-Called Life* that was directed by John Waters would sound—you know, '90s indie grunge meets goofy trashy kitsch. Side B lost me by sounding like BLANK DOGS if they started a speedy power-pop band. It's a mixed bag that's overall not that great. (MM)
(Plastic Spoons)

**THE INSURGENCE – CD**

This is a tough-guy hardcore band from Seattle, WA that is more suited for *AP* than *MRR*. The music is a BRONX and BULLET TREATMENT type of sound with plenty of guitar wanking and mid-to-fast-tempo drums, plus are your typical higher-pitched tough-guy vocals. A little generic for my tastes, but tough nonetheless. I can imagine their fans do a lot stretching before they play so as to not pull any groin muscles doing mid-show karate kicks. If this were the early '90s, the band would be wearing basketball jerseys. (MB)
(Digital Warfare)

**IT GOOD / NEW CREASES – split EP**

NEW CREASES is emo. The lady's vocals are high-pitched and screamy and her guitar playing, although somehow managing to surpass the lyrics' syrupy nostalgia, is scratchy enough for me to not hate it. Unsurprisingly, IT GOOD also shares the emo-style stops-and-starts and sad/triumphant chord choices. The vocalist kind of sounds like he got a cheap JEFF OTT pedal to sing through. They both sound like they like ADD/C a lot. (HD)
(Let's Pretend / No Breaks)

**JOHNNY THROTTLE – "Sick of Myself/Job in the City"**

Damn. This one comes at you right out of the gates and never lets up. It's so rock'n'roll while being very much punk rock, that it almost reminds me of 1977. Fuck, it sounds like the RADIATORS FROM SPACE. It's catchy as all hell. It's also got a sense of urgency that separates the great from the good. You owe it to yourself to go out and find this one. Shit, my head is still bouncing and the B-side ended five minutes ago. (KK)
(Crypt)

**KING LOUIE'S MISSING MONUMENTS – "Black Rainbow/Tailspin"**

I am probably not the right person to be writing this review, as I am not well versed in the historic importance of KING LOUIE. But in general, I like my garage to be raw, unfiltered and destructive—REATARDS, GORIES you know? This sounds like dad-rock to me—meaning something my dad would actually listen to that woulda come out on Chiswick Records, that era of English pub-rock when it was OK to like NICK LOWE. But I do not crave DAVE EDMUNDS-core. I actually can guarantee my dad would love this record, and I may buy it for him. The songs are really catchy and have a timeless feel, and if you are a fan of this sound you will not be disappointed. The rhyming couplet that was long the lines of "She's all right / She's tight / And this could be my night" or something to that effect made me a little queasy. A little grim. "She's tight"? Really. (LG)
(Douchemaster)

**KITCHEN FLOOR – "Orbit" EP**

This is great. Sort of sung, sort of chanted vocals over Moe Tucker drums and monotone guitars, sounds like it was recorded in a bedroom, and it's on a label called R.I.P. Society?? Reminds me of a less propulsive GUN OUTFIT with similar minor key melodics, though this band err more on the TELEVISION PERSONALITIES side of things than mid-'80s SST guitar-tronics. I like music that sounds compulsive and throwaway at once, like the people *had* to make it, and yet this is this all it is? But you have to listen to it over and over and over. Highly recommended. Sounds like teenage bedroom music—no idea it if is, but who cares? (LG)
(RIP Society)

**KNUSTE RUTER – "Gjennom Veggene" LP/CD**

This LP comes in on the coattails of KNUSTE RUTER's debut EP, which offered muscular, aggressive HC, albeit lacking in riffs that "stick to your ribs." Their latest full-length LP continues in the same vein, though the occasional vocal chorus adds melodic interest—especially on standout tracks like "Tenner." Perhaps not as authoritative as an outfit like STENGTE DORER, but this record does display its share of urgency. The CD version also includes tracks from their EP. (SS)
(Sjakk Matt)

**KOMINTERN SECT – "Les Seigneurs de la Guerre" LP**

What a lot of folks don't realize is that in the early-to-mid-'80s, France had one of the most bangin' Oi/punk scenes on earth. Among many others, bands like WARRIOR KIDS, KIDNAP, CAMERA SILENS, REICH ORGASM, KOMINTERN SECT and the rest of the Chaos Productions label were the sound of the streets. The sound was predominantly of the Oi nature but there were as many mohican heads as shaved ones making the tunes. This KOMINTERN SECT 12", their first, is as catchy as a punk record gets. Great football-chant choruses backed by rudimentary drumming and riffs. If modern bands like TEMPLARS or CRIMINAL DAMAGE float your boat, check out this reish to see where that sound really had its heyday. (JU)
(Euthanasie)

**KOPOS SUJUS – "Ultimo a Sair" CD**

Maybe I've watched too many Jose Mojica Marins movies (though I don't think it's possible to see too many of the works of the champion of DIY cinema), but I'm a sucker for Portuguese singing, especially with a Brazilian accent, and KOPOS SUJUS' brand of surf-influenced punk (early AGENT ORANGE is the obvious reference so, what the Hell, I'll throw it out there) makes the vocals seem all the more mysterious (already mysterious to me, since I don't palaver the lingua) and foreboding (in a fun way: their mission statement is to make "music to have fun, to drink, to sing high with friends at the bar or on the street"), though the foreboding might just be my flashing on Zé do Caixão. Four songs with three "bonus" songs, which I would guess means that the first four songs were released elsewhere, right? (DD)
(self-released)

**KRIMTÄNK / SUB ALERT – split EP**

I fucking loved the KRIMTÄNK EP, and this is more of the same fucked-up, ultra-fast *mangel* that I enjoy so much. The vocals are a bit overwhelming in the mix, but one expects a less-than-perfect recording for this style. Sounds very much like tracks from a lost MOB 47 demo. Six tunes in less than five minutes of sloppy drunken Swedish D-beat goodness. SUB ALERT is a bit of a letdown on the flip. It seems like they're going for a mixture of classic and modern styles but the transitions are a bit jarring and the songs sometimes seem like a bunch of parts strung together rather than a coherent whole. Everything comes together very well on the last track though, which makes lyrical point that Jesus (as depicted in the Bible anyway) had very little in common with today's religious social conservatives. Not the best split I've heard, but any new KRIMTÄNK material is worth picking up. (AU)
(Pike / Fight Back, no contact info)

**LEATHER – "Anchorite" EP**

Dark and heavy punk that's kind of hard to nail down. While the songs aren't super fast or aggressive, the recording is nasty and murky, which gives it a more extreme feel. Some songs maintain a steady pace, while others mix melodic vocals with slower, noisy guitar work. Maybe it's just my review copy, but there's a skip at the end of side B that drones on and on, and it seems fitting for this band. Cool artwork, too. (JH)
(Caesar Cuts)

**LEATHERFACE – "The Stormy Petrel" CD**

Any new LEATHERFACE record is cause for excitement, but perhaps this one is in particular, as it marks the return of original guitarist (and co-writer of a good chunk of the band's early material) Dickie Hammond to the fold. *The Stormy Petrel* has much in common with the band's last several releases—slightly more subdued songs; hushed, almost whispered vocals; the somewhat overused palm-muted-quiet-verse/louder-sweeping-chorus formula—as well as the melodic guitar interplay has been the band's most recognizable trademark since forever. This is all to say that the album *sounds* very much like a LEATHERFACE record, and I'm having a hell of a time trying to figure out why exactly I'm let down by it. The obvious answer is that my expectations were too high—the band's previous release, 2004's *Dog Disco*, was one of my favorites since the universally beloved *Mush*. Or maybe I just feel like I've heard these songs before, and they're missing something this time around that's hard to articulate. *The Stormy Petrel* is an otherwise very solid album, and after a number of listens, there are two tracks so far that jump out as classics. "Broken" is a slower ballad-esque number, "Another Dance" is more upbeat; both capture perfectly that wistful, beautiful sense of melancholy that has endeared LEATHERFACE to thousands of punks worldwide over the last two decades. (CS)
(No Idea)

**LIBYANS – "Paralyzed/Keep Waiting"**

Yo, how the fuck am I gonna cash in on this limited (to 400) single if I gotta tear open the fancy packaging to review it? Taking the bread outta my mouth… This one-sided, two-song 7", with the lyrics etched on the flip, gets better with every spin. The first song is up-tempo with busy drums and some nice singing; the guitar could be just a hair louder. The second one is closer to traditional fast hardcore, with male/female yelling and the drummer going wild. This record will find 398 consumers, I'm sure. (JM)
(self-released, no info)

**LIL DAGGERS / SATAN'S YOUTH MINISTERS – split EP**

Wow, it's like '90s all over again, and I'm not talking about the good ol' days. Nearly naked chicks draped over cars on the record cover and slowish, bar-rocky garage music that just does not deliver as much as it wants to and not nearly as much as it thinks it does. (IS)
(self-released, no contact info)

**THE LIMIÑANAS – "I'm Dead/Migas 2000"**

"I'm Dead" is an off-kilter pop song with deadpan sweet delivery: very appealing (and I don't often find this sort of thing appealing). "Migas 2000" is a top-drawer ye-ye number with good fuzzy tremelo guitar. A double-sided winner. (DD)
(HoZac)

**THE LOCALS – "You Never Have Fun/Yes or No"**

Wow! Sing Sing has hit another one out of the proverbial ballpark with this one! This is a reissue of the one and only release from this New York City band in 1980. Apparently they had a great live show, gigged from about '79-'83 and built up a decent following around NYC, and for good reason! If these two songs are a representation of what this band sounded like, then I'm not surprised that they won over a lot of fans. The songs are upbeat, fast and infectiously catchy—solid examples of US power-pop along the lines of fellow underappreciated bands like the NERVES! If you haven't already clued into what Sing Sing is doing, then get off your ass and check out all their great reissues, starting with the LOCALS!! (ML)
(Sing Sing)

**LÖGNHALSMOTTAGNINGEN – "Fina Nyanser I Nya Finanser" EP**

Can something be melodic *and* shit fi? I believe this is a cross-the-oceans project featuring a Swede who lives in Sweden (duh!), and a Brit with an indie pop history who lives in Texas—though I may be wrong. At any rate, if you are craving some *Bloodstains Across Sweden* and your supplier has dried up, LÖGNHALSMOTTAGNINGEN has got what you need. Vocals that contain snottier delivery than a bus packed with pus-filled children, guitar riffs that are eloquently trashy with some suitably trebley and wobbly guitar "leads," drums that sound like they're being played five rooms over by a drunken, sullen Nordic pogo-punk... This record adds to the legacy of their debut 7" from 2008, which disappeared faster than a donut at a police station. Don't be a fool! If you are charmed by stupid yet ingeniously constructed punk that sounds like it was a 7" recorded in 1981 that is now worth $500, grab this! (LG)
(Local Cross)

**THE MANDROIDS – "First Fabulous Issue" EP**

Seven rough-and-tumble tracks of early-'80s skate-punk-influenced punk rock. Rudimentary, with a nice low-budget feel—it's like the SPITS stripped of their robes or the STITCHES without their syringes. (SD)
(no contact info)

**MCRACKINS – "Live from Thunderbird Radio Hell" CD**

This may be the best sound quality on any live recording I've heard in years. Make note: when I say "best sound quality" I don't mean it in a nice, clear, clean, snazzy and polished sound. It's more like a cheap yet endearing studio recording. I haven't heard of this band until now, but they formed in the early-to-mid-'90s and have a sound that fits in perfectly with other heavy hitters of the day—the QUEERS and/or SCREECHING WEASEL. And I don't mean that in a condescending way; they clearly weren't ripping off either, it's just that their sound is in the same vein. They are totally gimmicky, but it works 100% for what they are doing. (BD)
(Killer)

**MESS FOLK – "Modern Man" EP**

Nice proto-punk sound, comparable to the (Australian) CHOSEN FEW (but more mid-tempo) and other groups equally influenced by garage punk and the STOOGES. Not a hint of retro self-consciousness/affectation, just so you don't get the wrong idea: these guys sound like the real deal. (DD)
(Plastic Spoons)

**MOJOMATICS – "Love Wild Fever/Heavy Dose of Sympathy"**

Good to see that straight-up garage 'n' roll is still alive and well in Italia. The A coulda come off a Rip-Off Records 7" back in the day; the flip has a swaggering hillbilly vibe sounding like some fucked up garage JOHNNY CASH. I dig this band a lot. (TB)
(Big Neck)

**LOS MONJO – "Mexicanos Al Grito de Mierda" EP**

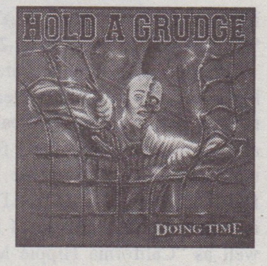
A much welcomed and very rocking follow-up to the *Cerdos* and *Cobardes* EPs from Guadalajara, Mexico's LOS MONJO. Reminiscent of '80s Spanish punk but with more of a '50s rock feel, if you get me. These four songs are catchy and got me singing right along—a good thing indeed. I don't know but I think this is palatable to almost every type of punk put there. Check 'em out! (RR)
(Solo Para Punks)

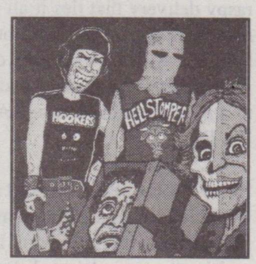
**MOUTH SEWN SHUT – "2009" LP**

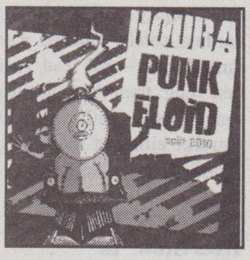
Fourteen songs which feature re-recording of tracks from their previous two full-lengths and split 7"s EPs as well as new tracks. Boston's MOUTH SEWN SHUT has always reminded me of a fusion of *Dead Time*-era LOGICAL NONSENSE (pummeling '90s hardcore where there was a metallic heft but not a metal feel) and a melodic undercurrent with ska parts, though the delivery is modern so that is just a point of reference—MOUTH SEWN SHUT's delivery is most precise and reaches a blindingly fast pace, especially (and oddly) late in the record. I imagine this LP comprises the bulk of the band's current live set, as the gig flyers suggest they play live unrelentingly and the delivery is quicker and much faster than the previous versions. The lyrics—about war, information security, war, corporation, the government—are earnest, modern, political and most importantly relevant. Only complaint is the recording (or mastering) compresses the music somewhat, pushing their gruff, barked vocals a little high in the mix. A minor point to a great and recommended colored vinyl record in a nice gatefold package with a printed inner sleeve. (KS)
(Rodent Popsicle)

**MUCH WORSE – "Proper Execute" EP**

Wow. This is some serious Japanese hardcore worship here. I'm not entirely sure how to feel about this. Everything is absolutely dead-on: the songwriting, the guitar tone, the drums, even the vocals. At times, in fact, the vocals are a little too dead on: it's a little unsettling hearing some guy named Max from Minneapolis doing his best GAUZE impression on the mic. This is a good record, but I can't imagine I'll ever go back and give it a spin when I can listen to LIP CREAM or CHICKEN BOWELS instead, or even NINE SHOCKS TERROR. I'll keep my eyes peeled for more releases from MUCH WORSE, though, because this definitely shows huge promise, just not enough originality for me. (VX)
(Pass Judgement)





**MYSTERIOUS ASTHMATIC AVENGER – "From Texas to Tyrol 1992-2002" CD**

Though no label is indicated, this certainly seems like a Voodoo Rhythm release: the graphics, the twisted rootsy music, the batshit don't-give-a-fuck attitude (which is necessary for a French Swiss guy to do a worthy take on the LEGENDARY STARDUST COWBOY/HASIL ADKINS shtick, and this is indeed worthy). Covers of HANK WILLIAMS as well as "California Hippie Murders," acoustic and electric, one-man and full band, this guy does it all! (DD)
(no contact info)

**NAILS – "One Fix" EP**

This melodic punk/hardcore band from Berlin has grown on me with each subsequent listen and my opinion has gone from thinking they were just OK to flipping it over and over and reading along with the lyrics and really digging it. The sound comes off as a blend of mid-tempo hardcore like later-period ARTICLES OF FAITH and modern straight edge. But the song structure also gives a nod towards rock and roll à la SOCIAL DISTORTION and the singer has a nice and raspy delivery that ties it all together. The lyrics fall mostly along the personal, but they're profound and heartfelt. All four tracks are crafted with killer guitar work and tempo changes and the EP comes off more as a mini-album as a result. A promising debut. (BG)
(La Familia)

**NEW CREASES – "About Last Night" EP**

I think I'm going to start my next mix tape out with the first song on this record. It's nice and fast, catchy, and has some rad bass-lines and girl vocals somewhere between Lauren from the MEASURE [S.A.] and Kim from the MUFFS. The other song on the first side is pretty much the same with guy vocals and similar fast, catchy tuneage. The second side follows the same format—girl lead vocals, guy back-ups on the first song, then the other way around for the second song. This is totally worth checking out, especially if you like either of the bands mentioned above. (BD)
(Traffic Street / No Breaks)

**THE NEW YORKER – "Home Is Where the Trees Grow" EP**

I was psyched the minute the needle dropped: chaotic, spastic teen angst à la MOHINDER just exploded off the wax. That lasted for about six seconds, and then came the disjointed, anguished and familiar sounds of '90s Midwestern screamo. The NEW YORKER hails from Indiana, and I really, really like about two-thirds of their record. They are fast, the guitar plays some riffs that are totally off the wall, they have a tri-vocal assault that is ever-present and punishing, they completely avoid mosh-metal nonsense that sometimes infiltrates this music, but songs like "Mexico" take the all-over-the-map approach to dizzying heights and it just makes me tired. The recording quality leaves a little to be desired… I know what you are saying—"This is punk you fukkn bearded princess!"—but when the music is this complex and intricate, many of the nuances get lost in a wash of lo-fi, and the songs suffer as a result. Solid record, and I have little doubt that they will improve. (WN)
(Fortunes)

**NIGHT BIRDS – "Prognosis: Negative" EP**

I'll admit I'm a sucker for pretty much anything that Dirtnap releases, and this record is no exception. NIGHT BIRDS play fast, kinda dirty rock 'n' roll with surf influences throughout. If you were to take AGENT ORANGE, NEW BOMB TURKS, and the VENTURES and throw 'em in a bender, you'd get something that sounds like NIGHT BIRDS. Thanks guys, I'm now two for two on great records this month! (BD)
(Dirtnap / Grave Mistake)

**THE NON-BELIEVERS – "From the Bottom" CD**

I know that the last thing this band is looking for is another comparison to the STREET BRATS (who this band has former members of), but it is a simple and obvious comparison! The NON-BELIEVERS may be a little less angsty and snotty than the STREET BRATS, but the same catchy and melodic hooks abound on this CD through the fusion of slightly glam and pop-punk songs. This stuff is up-tempo and heavy on layers of jangling guitars with lots of harmonized background vocals throughout incredible sing-along choruses, creating anthemic punk rock songs! (ML)
(Brat Pack)

**OLHO SECO – "Botas, Fuzis, Capacetas" EP**

An exact reproduction of the legendary 1983 debut EP of one of Brazil's (and the world's) greatest early hardcore bands, featuring their *Welcome to 1984* compilation LP hit "Nada." There's incredible irony that one of the songs people know best in the US from South America is an anti-immigration rant, but it remains a fantastic, anthemic blueprint of buzzsaw guitar and gravel vocals. "Nada," written in 1980 when the members were probably teens, is just as much a condemnation of government infectiveness. The flipside are two more blasters against war that might not capture the same catchiness, but maintain and even amp up the raw intensity. Released in apparent collaboration with the original label Punk Rock Discos, re-mastered with enhanced sound quality and a new insert with vintage band photos. 27 years later this still sounds urgent and boss. (KS)
(Nada Nada / Punk Rock)

**ORGANIZED SPORTS – "G.U.I.D.O." EP**

I knew this one could go either way based on the combo of horrible artwork and two VOID references (the band's name, and one much more subtle that I will let you figure out for yourself) on the cover. Thankfully, it's pretty dang good. The music is fast and wild yet under control, with perfect vocals to hammer out the minute-long outbursts of HC fury—the way they should be played. If you are a fan of all the other modern bands that get the VOID or DIE KREUZEN tag, you'll most likely like ORGANIZED SPORTS. This is good stuff and I'm excited to hear more from this lot. (JU)
(HIV Town, no info)

**THE OVER ATTACKS – "Heads On The Shelf" CD**

Raw, up-tempo punk from Finland. Raspy vocals give this a RANCID-meets-hardcore-meets-early-SWINGIN'-UTTERS feel. Certainly for the rockin' crowd, these boys rip thru eleven songs in just over twenty minutes. Vocals in English. This disc sounds pretty damn good. (RL)
(Heat Wave)

**PARLAMENTARISK SODOMI – "Regnskog, Fred Og Vegetarmat" EP**

PARLAMENTARISK SODOMI has been one of my favorite grindcore bands over the last couple years so I am psyched to get his latest release to review. A one-man band from Norway who has his own take on the genre—he doesn't fall into derivative styles or really sound like other grind bands. The lyrics, mostly in Norwegian, are harshly political/social commentaries, including a track about eating meat (or not eating it), a track about a Norwegian fascist party and an anti-USA track. This is great grindcore. (MH)
(625 Thrash)

**PRETTY BOY THORSON AND THE SLOW DEATH / THE STRAIT A'S – split EP**

THE STRAIT A'S start their side off with a blast of pop that reminds me of a cross between SCREECHING WEASEL and the FASTBACKS. It's not as polished though, which makes it really likeable to me. The guitar is pretty raw and catchy and the female/male trade-off vocals are awesome. Also, they manage to put four good tunes on one side of an EP. Good work! On the flip, we have PRETTY BOY THORSON AND THE SLOW DEATH. The first song on here is really catchy in that swaying-on-the-porch-with-a-beer-in-your-hand sort of way. It brings to mind mid-era SOCIAL DISTORTION and early BELTONES. Then, they throw a curve ball with an unexpected cover of "Ray of Sunshine" by GO SAILOR! Whoa! Altogether, this is a great listen. (GH)
(Kiss of Death)

**THE PROCESS – "The Kennedy Sessions" CD**

Starting with a sound bite from the 1960s Kennedy assassinations and continuing with songs largely themed about the JFK assassination on the inside, there's a bit of a question mark why a band from the UK would even fucking care almost 50 years later. Yeah, Texas is the reason that the president's dead and all that, but when late-'70s punk bands like the MISFITS or even more so DEAD KENNEDYS were reacting to something in their own recent personal memories, the political repercussions still affected their and their fans' daily lives. These days, you might as well write about the War of 1812 or the assassination of President Garfield. It's a critical problem—punk continually recycles the past in the form of Vietnam, JFK and Reagan imagery or even typewriter or stencil fonts that are tied to recent memory in the 1980s, but mean less and less rehashed 30 years later. They're just done out of tradition and style, but it's a pale imitation of the immediate reaction that made that punk of that time so great. It just seems lazy and easy, without taking a risk of saying anything personal or making a stand on current problems. Fortunately, the music here, culled from two demos and a 7" from the middle of the last decade, is not a pale imitation. A high-octane destructive blast combining UK thrash with screamed vocals like SHANK, down-tuned dredging and slow, rock driven pummel like DAMNATION A.D. "Mid-fi" demo recording works perfectly for this, holding strong between the solid, throttling thrash and beefy low-end reverberations, but musically all kicks out at a level way beyond demo quality. Blazing! (KS)
(625 Thrash)

**PROSTHETICS – "Bad Intensions" LP**

*Bad Intentions* is a killer punk record that I have been listening to non-stop since I picked it up last week! Thrashing, crashing and bashing their way through the whole damn thing, PROSTHETICS

channel some vintage ANNIHILATION TIME and are heavy on the RITES influence to give them a perfect blend of menacing thrash 'n' roll punk tunes! Their screaming guitars are backed by some *solid* drumming and tuff vocals. Definitely one of the best full-lengths I've heard in a while. And lucky us, my sources (the internet) tell me they are going on tour this summer—find them and destroy the place! (RM)
(self-released)

**PUFFY AREOLAS – "In the Army 1981" LP**

What more can be said about music from Ohio? Creative damage seems to ooze from its pores. This is a colossal brutal beast of an LP, a total attack, the true sound of the Midwest's rotten core, incorporated by bands from the STOOGES to SPIKE IN VAIN and now this—like some private-press psychedelics, but we're talking PCP rather than shrooms. The guitar is pounding, relentless and all those other critical clichés that come up when confronted with a totality of sound; the singer sounds like he's channelling DARBY CRASH and ROKY ERICKSON at the same time; then a sax will impede and everything gets uglier than you thought possible. In short, this is a great LP. It will be in your top ten of the year, and since it is the first time you can grab a piece of recorded output from this band without having to join a secret society record hoarder outfit, you better use the opportunity wisely, my friends! Plus, this band features someone who was once in TYVEK. If you care about that, you'll care about this. It's music by people who got messages sent to them and them alone in the grooves of ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS. (LG)
(Siltbreeze)

**RANGE RATS – LP**

Finally a proper release of Fred and Toody Cole's post-RATS, pre-DEAD MOON act. Recorded way back in '85 in said couple's bedroom whilst still sounding way better than most stuff that tumbles out of a "proper" recording studio. Rough-and-ready country rock with great duel-harmony vocal stylings, JOHNNY CASH feel that permeates the record and lends it a dark, brooding vibe. Stick alongside GUN CLUB and NICK CAVE. Great. (SD)
(Mississippi)

**RATAS DEL VATICANO – "Tiempos de Austeridad" 12"**

Here's the latest from Monterrey, Mexico's former trio, now four-piece darlings. It's lo-fi, gritty, simple and mid-tempo with a hint of Mexican raw punk distinct to Mexican street punk roots, yet the chord progression, drumbeats and melodies are definitely straight-up garage. There is a gloomy and menacing feel to the songs that make me certain that these guys and gal watch a lot of classic horror movies. The song titles don't really say much, but I am a sucker for songs like "Rock Doesn't Die." If you are a fan of ULTRATUMBADOS, but lean to the garage side of musical taste, I suggest picking it up. Oh! And it's a one-sided 12" with a cool etching on the B-side of, what else—rats!!! (MB)
(Captcha)

**RAW NERVE – LP**

I'll admit that I have avoided Youth Attack releases these last few years for the simple fact that there was no way any of the records could possible live up to the sold-out-in-five-minutes mystique that surrounded them. Enter the last handful of records… First off, the VILE GASH EP also reviewed this month is fucking incredible. Like, killer. OK, back to RAW NERVE… Flat out, this 12" is sick. Noisy, wild, feedback-y, blasting, uncomfortable, tense, tweeking blazers fill the majority of these sea-foam-green grooves with one instrumental and one side-long slow lurker thrown into the mix. While it will probably get old really fast, I'm still really enjoying this new WHITEHOUSE/BRAINBOMBS/SPK/M.B. influence that has been brought into hardcore the last year or so. Well, at least sonically. It's a nice touch that makes the now-sound something all its own. Whether RAW NERVE takes from those influences or not, I have no idea, but they definitely push the same sound as many that do. (JU)
(Youth Attack)

**THE REACTORS – "I Want Sex/Seduction Center"**

Would it be to presumptuous of me to say that if you don't know of this single already that your life has been a total waste up until this point? This New York City (technically Connecticut) band recorded this classic in 1979 and practically nobody owns a copy today because it's fucking rare as hell (I've heard there were only a 100 copies made and some of those were lost in a flood or something, but I don't know for sure). Most people know "I Want Sex" from *Killed By Death #14* and "Seduction Center" on volume #19 of the series, but now you have a chance to have it as its own glorious single done just right with a high quality cover and great sound quality. These are two songs that helped define the KBD sound and aesthetic—raw, snotty and mysterious in origin. The guitar just destroys all over the place on this. *I want sex I want sex I want sex* will be lodged in your brain for days. I guarantee you'll listen to this over and over before taking it off the turntable. Mandatory. (BG)
(Last Laugh)

**RED MASS – "To All the Good People/The Truth About Baby Jane"**

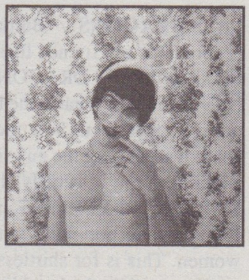
RED MASS is a perfect example of an unknown treasure that could have slipped by under the radar since the name is unfamiliar and the cover didn't grab me. I mean, an ice cream cone floating in the clouds with two sad eyeballs is generally not the type of artwork that would immediately make me take a chance on an unknown single! But this is very cool punk rock and roll that has an assortment of influences to set it apart from generic nonsense. The title track is a nice blend of '60s garage and '70s punk that brings to mind the better JEFF DAHL solo material. The flipside is filled with weird noises, killer-yet-simplistic psychedelic guitar work, and a catchy trashcan drumbeat that's guaranteed to win your approval. This single compelled me to look further into the band and I discovered that RED MASS is a collective of sorts and that each recording has different people contributing. Whatever their formula, it works. Check this out. (BG)
(Dusty Medical)

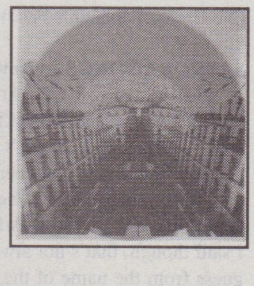
**REDSKINS – "Epilogue" CD**

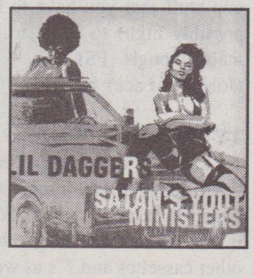
Eleven tracks of REDSKINS rarities including three songs from their previous band NO SWASTIKAS, the As and Bs from the first two singles, three demo tracks and one live. The packaging is great, selection of tunes amazing, the production spot on. If you ain't familiar with these English legends, think of Two-Tone Records with its leftist roots taken to a higher level by a band that pushed a radical political agenda intensified by the backdrop of early-'80s England (miners' strike, inner-city riots, hunger strikes, massive unemployment and the rise of the British far right). The REDSKINS never surrendered music quality over political message—in fact, their soul-infused dance-punk was a perfect accompaniment to their socialist doctrine. This band lived and breathed it: ran the gauntlet, dressed the part and managed to keep a shit-load of skinheads from falling into the ranks of the National Front/BNP whilst making them aware that left-wing politics are the true politics of the working classes. Take no heroes, only inspiration. Brilliant. (SD)
(Insurgence)

**RELIGIOUS SS DISORDER / SKELETON PARTY – split LP**

There's not much in common between these two bands, with the possible exception of them both being from Grand Rapids, MI. SKELETON PARTY is more on the discordant side: staccato rhythms, harsh noise, effects—maybe a bit like FAT DAY or GOD IS MY CO-PILOT. RELIGIOUS SS DISORDER, along with having a pretty ridiculous name, is more straight-ahead punk rock: grinding guitars and harsh female vox. There's nothing terribly groundbreaking to recommend this record, but if you see either of these bands and enjoy them, you could do worse than picking it up. (AM)







**RVIVR – "Rain Down" LP**

You know how sometimes you look forward to a new record for so long, knowing that it's going to totally fucking rule and reaffirm that band as an all-time favorite, then the record comes out and it's a total letdown? It's happened to me more than enough times in the past that I was worried it was going to happen with this one. Well, I don't know why I ever had an inkling of doubt. This is an instant year-end top ten without a doubt. RVIVR have an uncanny ability to take shitty situations and experiences and translate them to songs that somehow make you feel upbeat and positive about making it through those tough times. On top of that, they are such an amazing band to experience live. I can't even count how many times I've seen these kids, whether it was at some shitty bar with a handful of small-town punks, or at a goat farm in the middle of nowhere with a couple hundred kids going crazy—it's always totally worth whatever it takes to get there. Hopefully by the time you read this, you will have caught one of the shows on their current US tour and been able to see for yourself. (BD)

(Rumbletowne)

**SASS DRAGONS – "Bonkaroo!" LP**

Some of my friends like this band a lot, but I've only heard SASS DRAGONS live up until this point. Now I wonder "What is the big fuckin' deal?" I'm not going to talk about how the lyrics are offensive because it seems like the guys in the band would just get a kick out of it. Musically, this is in the realm of DAS KAPITAL, BI-FURIOUS and the DESCENDENTS. It's energetic pop-punk with lines about drugs and women. This is for shirtless dudes who like to shotgun beers while the band is setting up. That is not an endorsement. (GH)

(No Breaks / Johann's Face)

**SASS DRAGONGS – "New Kids on the Bong" CD**

This is a weird CD. At its best, it's really fun HICKEY and TOYS THAT KILL influenced pop-punk, and at its worst, it's boring bar-punk. But it goes everywhere in between. Most songs are drastically different from the ones before them, which is refreshing, and awesome when they pull it off. Like I said though, that's not always the case. As you can guess from the name of the album, the dudes in this band are definitely goofy, at times to a fault. It's silly pop stuff that you have to be in a good mood (and possibly high) to listen to. It defiantly has its moments though. (FS)

(Johann's Face)

**TY SEGALL – "Horn the Unicorn" LP**

This is a collection of early TY SEGALL works featuring first and foremost the infallible *Horn the Unicorn* cassette that *MRR* loved as a demo when it first reached the mag. There are also tracks from other cassettes and 7"s as well as a couple unreleased songs. If you find recent TY records to be a little too blissful or Dwyer-influenced, this early stuff is less sun-soaked and candy-tinged, and in turn more fuzzed and gnarly. It's obvious that when these songs were made, an overall aesthetic was still in the process of forming, so a lot of this album is all over the place. If your tastes lend more to a hard-to-pin down style that is raw and energetic and you'd rather forgo the pop and structure, this is where to start with TY records. (AL)

(Captcha)

**TY SEGALL – "Melted" CD**

With his third LP, it seems TY is hittin' his stride. Anyone familiar with the current crop of tweaked-out psych from SF (SIC ALPS, OH SEES, etc.) will have an idea what to expect. Imagine *Pet Sounds* through a distortion pedal with a sheet of LSD and mescaline to hand. I imagine if the likes of the 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS were around now, this is the kind of noise they'd make. It's a bedroom recording, lo-fi as fuck, but the songs shine though the noise. Essentially this is a clutch of pop songs played by a dude who has spent too much time with his CAN, BILLY CHILDISH and T. REX records. Fabulous stuff. (TB)

(Goner)

**THE SEPTIC PSYCHOS – "Rotten and Rancid" CD**

Back in the day, the SEPTIC PSYCHOS were on the bottom rung of what is now known as UK82 punk. Straight-ahead thrashy punk, with not really much in the way of style or substance. Decent, but thoroughly unremarkable. As was the wont in those days, they released a demo tape and a couple of tracks on a Pax punk compilation. Then split up. Now that punk is bigger than ever, and UK82 has some cachet, the lads (who later did some time with RIOT SQUAD) reformed, re-recorded their demo and a couple of new tracks, and well, now finally have a full-length release. Good for them. Music is still largely unremarkable, but it is actually good to see that the older generation is still up for giving it a go with gusto. (RK)

(Punker Pages)

**SFTM – "Too Weird to Live" CD**

Posthumous best-of collection of 1999-2005 material. There's an ANTISEEN connection, so maybe it would have been better reviewed by Bruce, but I'll do my darndest. Reminds me of the hardcore/metal crossover period of '84 or so (memory ain't what it used to be), plus double-bass-drum action (if there were double-bass-drum in punk bands then, I don't remember it) to make the speed more breakneck and with slicker production than most of those bands mustered up. For my particular old fart tastes, the songs that seem more like garage band aiming for BLACK SABBATH ("From Hot to Cold") hit the sweet spot, but that's just me. (DD)

(Mystery School)

**SHITTY LIMITS – "Last Orders/Selling Point"**

Pop the kettle on and arrange your best biscuits on a tray; prolific punkers SHITTY LIMITS have come 'round for tea and they've brought two new spiky, energetic tunes. The first song has an abbreviated rhythm and a repetitive, somewhat CHILDISH riff, with spoken lyrics that take the form of one long rant, never so much as hinting at a chorus. Seems like a bit of a departure but it works. The flip is back to business as usual: taut, scratchy, pogo-friendly garage punk with barbed, cynical lyrics. It's not their best release, but it's a worthwhile addition to the LIMITS oeuvre. Now, do I want to pick up a Penguin or shall I dunk a Digestive? (AM)

(La Vida Es Un Mus)

**SICK ELECTRIC – "Death by Electrocution" CD**

This is like what BLINK 182 would sound like if they were somewhere in between the mathy bullshit of DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN and emo rap rock industrial of LINKIN PARK. Fucking shit sandwich. (MM)

(self-released, no info)

**SLAKTRENS – "Ur Balans" EP**

Two-person Swedish punk band that rips through some raw, somewhat sloppy hardcore tracks. John (ex-FROM THE ASHES) plays drums and Stefan plays guitar; both sing. I dig this, but on a few songs it's as if the drums and guitar are out of sync. Love the social and political lyrics and the all-go attitude on most of the fifteen short tracks. They remind me a bit of KRIGSHOT or MOB 47. (MH)

(Rawby)

**SLAUGHTER – "Nocturnal Karnage" LP**

To steal a line from the immortal Bruce Roehrs—*fuck yes!* This is not the sort of thing that *MRR* usually covers, but the amount of influence the early SLAUGHTER demos and the *Strappado* LP had on punk/metal crossover is undeniable. These CELTIC FROST/HELLHAMMER-worshipping Canadian maniacs have, like REPULSION, just recently gotten their due as pioneers in the field of lo-fi brutality. The buzzing guitars and primitive blastbeats (well, they're not really blasts but they're obvious precursors to the same) established a template soon followed by bands as diverse as NAPALM DEATH, MORBID ANGEL and SACRILEGE. Dave Hewson's "Ooooh" is second only to that of Mr. Tom G. Warrior himself. These tracks are collected from the *Nocturnal Hell* EP, the *Bloody Karnage* demo and a few rehearsal sessions (including the plodding "F.O.D." that just barely avoids a direct rip-off of FROST's "Dethroned Emperor"). The EP tracks are excellent, but the real gem is the demo with its goofy shouted vocals and (thankfully barely remastered) garage-quality recording. This shit is just as punk as it is metal, with a very DIY "Hey guys, let's make a demo" feel and simple chord progressions that demonstrate some serious GBH/DISCHARGE influence. This quality Agipunk reissue includes some educational liner notes, cover art and a classic collage of live photos and fliers. "Make way for the incinerator!" (AU)

(Agipunk)

**SOCIETY OF FRIENDS – CD**

*OK… Deep breath… Ready?!* SOCIETY OF FRIENDS A.K.A. QUAKERS delivered some of the harshest hardcore that ever came from Texas. Throughout the '90s and early '00s, they cranked out EPs that no one paid any attention to, and dished out the monumental *Growing Up, Moving Away* LP before they did exactly that (grew up and moved away). August has been one of the most transfixing hardcore singers in the US for a decade-and-a-half and counting (CROWN ROAST, SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, STREET WIZARD, ELECTRIC EYE, and now LORDS OF LIGHT and WALLS) but too many people stop with his frustrated inwardly directed rage and seemingly nonsensical but often brilliant lyrics like "Trapped in a Kamode": "It seems so out of place / To comment on the human race / Right, wrong / Everything is gone." The music SOCIETY OF FRIENDS made came from another stratosphere…metallic guitar riffs speed-picking a million miles a second with drums blasting and churning, but never once do you doubt that they are a fucking *punk* band. The songs are just so fucking weird and disjointed, it makes for a truly trying listen (which I imagine was the desired effect). Totally heavy, but yet the recordings are pretty thin by today's standards; these songs lurch and surge and then come to terrifying halts before blasting forward. SOCIETY OF FRIENDS will out-grind your grindcore, out-power your violence, out-weird

your art freaks, out-hard your core and out-smart your books… and then they'll move on to the next song. The live shows are the stuff of legend (and well worthy of that status), but what remains is this 50+ song testament to a bunch of freaks from Texas playing hardcore. Salute. (WN)
(625 Thrash / Rescued From Life)

**SO COW – "Meaningless Friendly" LP**
This is the second US-released LP for hardy buck Brian Kelly under the nom-de-song SO COW. And the first was sort of a "best-of" from earlier self-released CDs, so it doesn't really count. If you've missed out on SO COW up 'til now, you're in for a treat. The album is populated with quirky, intricate, multi-layered pop songs: it's actually pretty amazing to me that songs this structurally and melodically complex were actually played and recorded entirely by one person. It sounds like a really tight, well-rehearsed band. Think of the dry wit of the TELEVISION PERSONALITIES combined with the helter-skelter dance-ability of XTC. The one time I saw this band live, they played the theme from *Only Fools and Horses*. That was a belter. (AM)
(Tic Tac Totally)

**SOUTHSIDE STRANGLERS – "Strangle You" EP**
Well, the GOVERNMENT WARNING guys have apparently progressed from '80s hardcore into mid-'80s "hardcore rock'n'roll" à la NECROS but with better production (and, I'll admit it, better songs). The B-side is a helluva lot better than the A-side (actually, the B-side is really great), but I do think these guys should have stuck to hardcore. I guess you could say the same for me. (BB)
(Fashionable Idiots)

**SPASTIC PANTHERS / THE THROWAWAYS – split EP**
This was handed to me with the following comment: "This is a split EP. This band, the THROWAWAYS is total Kenny-core. The other band isn't." The THROWAWAYS reminds me of the old Subway stuff like the FLATMATES, though it is far faster and rougher around the edges. It also got a little MENSEN going on. "Kenny-core" is right. It's faster-paced. It's not over-produced. It's got the female vocals. And while it's got a pop edge, it's still very much punk rock. This will prove, once and for all, that Kenny-core is not at all the same as pussy-core. SPASTIC PANTHERS deliver old-school-style hardcore that is mid-tempo, melodic and maybe just a little angry. I can't say that I listen to a ton of hardcore these days, but this is one I like. (KK)
(Handsome)

**STICKS N STONES – "Red Light/Time Change"**
Fuckin' A, this is a power-pop gem. Seriously. A gem. This sounds like it could have come off one of those *Powerpearls* compilations that came out to document the power-pop period from 1976 to 1983. One side has female vocals, the other male. Both are standouts. I'm not sure if the Dusty Medical Records is at all related to Douchemaster, but I guess I wouldn't be surprised. I can't get over how catchy this is. This is another worthy of the extra effort it might take to find it. (KK)
(Dusty Medical)

**STRAIGHTSHOOTER –"Straightshooter/She's So Fine"**
NYC-based Sing Sing Records seems committed to reissuing any and every scrap of the '70s/'80s, er, "punky power-pop" story; here's one of the latest installments. I remember this UK SRTS single was featured on a Low Down Kids mixtape a decade ago, that's the first and last time I'd heard of it. No doubt it's been a Japanese want-list staple ever since. From 1979, a solid poppy two-sider with both pub rock and punky overtones. I'm happy to report I can still live without an original. But all you Anglophiles, especially those with '70s glitter/glam fixations of late, probably need to go out at grab this. (GB)
(Sing Sing)

**SURVET SKINS – LP**
French Oi has always had a place in my heart for some reason. This shit is top-drawer skin music. Sung in French, tough as shit and catchy as all hell…reminds me of a less scratchy TOUGHSKINS from Japan. Tons of back-ups and a cover that looks deceptively like a hardcore record. They even manage to do an Oi version of rocksteady classic "Ride Your Donkey" and totally pull it off. This is boss!! (TB)
(Euthanasie)

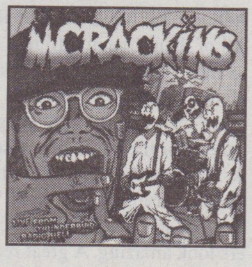
**TIMMY'S ORGANISM – "I'm on a Hunt" EP**
Timmy Vulgar is a non-stop music monster. On this new single, he opens up with a boozy stomper that's reminiscent of the CLONE DEFECTS. That is, drawing more from New York sleaze, loaded with JOHNNY THUNDERS riffs and all that beautifulness, rather than reaching for the outer/innerspace mind-fuckedness he's been mining a lot lately. The B-side delivers standard Timmy fare, but really it just makes me want to listen to the A-side again and again and again. (IS)
(Douchemaster)

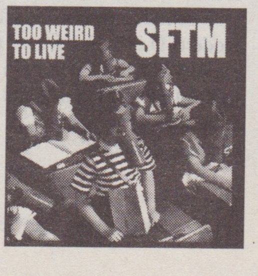
**THE TUNNELRUNNERS – "Plastic Land" EP**
So you all probably know the deal with Sing Sing Records by now. Even if the record they're reissuing is *just OK*, at least they do a nice job with the details. However, this might be their best one since they did the first RUDI single. I was familiar with the TUNNELRUNNERS as a song from this EP opened *Powerpearls Vol. 4*, but even that did not prepare me for the awe-inspiring perfection of the title track. For rough-around-the-edges DIY UK punk/power-pop, it doesn't get much better than this—crackling guitar, yearning vocals, simple but crushingly killer hooks...had these guys been from Northern Ireland instead of Wales, there's no doubt *Plastic Land* would've come out on Good Vibrations. Supposedly it was recorded live at a local radio station back in 1980, so the sound quality is distinctly lo-fi—more so than some demos—but it works to the songs' advantage in this instance. Obviously, this gets my highest recommendation. Postscript: The TUNNELRUNNERS had a follow-up EP released in 1982 from the same session—somebody *please* do a reissue, ASAP! (CS)
(Sing Sing)

**TONSTARTSSBANDHT – "Midnite Cobras" EP**
So the first side sounds like WAVVES meets VIVIAN GIRLS with an extra layer of fuzz. Side B treads into weirder psychedelic territory with a LED ZEPPLIN style trip-out. It's catchy enough for repeated listens but at the same time it's kind of just another band in a line of bands that kind of sound like this. (MM)
(Psychic Handshake)

**TUTU AND THE PIRATES – "Sub-Urban Insult Rock for the Anti/Lectual 1977-1979" LP**
Whoa! TUTU has been an irksome mystery to me for 15 years now, ever since I snagged a '70s issue of Chicago's *Gabba Gabba Gazette* fanzine with cover feature. I always figured the myth was too good to be true… just another meh Chicago new wave band. Nope, it's *punk rock!* Never imagined there was an entire album's worth of mostly studio material lurking, all with their patented Toilet Bowl Bass! Shit is way lo-fi '70s bored-as-fuck barroom knucklehead trash; I suspect they could clear a room pretty quick circa 1978. Some tracks work better than others, but if you want to hear actual P-U-N-K from 1970s Chicago, this is pretty much *it*. Here's hoping Regressive Films/Factory 25 get the much-needed STRIKE UNDER retrospective out next. Great packaging, white vinyl and extensive liner notes—highly recommended for all KBD obsessives. (GB)
(Factory 25)

**2009 – "The Future Is Soon" LP**
Awesome grungy pop-punk! Super dirty and catchy; kind of similar to a lo-fi CARRIE NATIONS. Maybe kind of close to SEXY at times. Apparently this is a project made up of the kids in





ADD/C, DEAD DOG and ROCK PAPER STUPID. All of them live in different cities and came together to make this record and play periodically. It's one of the better pop-punk LPs to come out so far this year—just about every song on the record is good, except for the instrumental song in the middle of side A…and maybe the one on the B-side, too. But seriously everything else rips! Vocals are totally blown out, but still sound kind of cool. Hand-screened covers look amazing. A great record! (FS)
(No Breaks / Let's Pretend)

**UNDERDOG – "Not Like You" EP**
Bridge Nine has done the world a great service by reissuing this end-all-be-all platter of classic NYHC from '86. My holy trinity of second-wave New York hardcore is JUDGE *New York Crew*, STRAIGHT AHEAD *Breakaway*, and this EP. It's just a fucking stone-cold classic and as important to the development of US hardcore as *almost* anything else that pops into your head when thinking about the classics. It's just so fucking tough without having to rely (solely) on the mosh, and it's quite impossible to listen these songs without hearing the BAD BRAINS' influence in the riffs and vocals. Man, I don't know what else to say about this, I really don't. Fuck. Just do yourself a favor and buy this if you don't have an OG. (JU)
(Bridge Nine)

**UNHOLY GRAVE – "Grind Hell" 10"**
A new fifteen-track 10" from Japan's most prolific grindcore band. After listening to hundreds and hundreds of UNHOLY GRAVE songs and releases I was expecting to be bored but the opening riff caught my attention. By now I think you've heard UNHOLY GRAVE if you're paying attention at all. You know the story: solid mid-paced grindcore with unique vocals. The highlight of this release was an awesome cover of MIND OF ASIAN's "Life." "Mental Disease" has a slight Swedish grind influence, which was a nice change of pace. If you need more UNHOLY GRAVE tracks you wouldn't go wrong picking this one up. (MH)
($10 PPD: Document Four)

**UNRULED – "Butchers of Warfare" LP**
New material from an old-school Montreal hardcore band whose '83 *Time Is Running Out* EP is a minor UK82-style classic. That record clearly influenced INEPSY, so it makes sense that the reformed UNRULED includes Chany and Sam from INEPSY along with the original guitar and bass players. The new material is actually pretty fucking strong, though the guitar player really wants to demonstrate how much better he's gotten in the intervening years (i.e. solos a bit too much) and the recording is cleaner than I would prefer. That being said, Chany's vocals work extremely well with the songs and if this were a new band (which it is in a way) I'd say it's well above average for a debut. It's funny how out-of-place the redone TOXIC REASONS-esque "Time Is Running Out" sounds after almost a full albums' worth of more modern D-beat. I have to admit though, I like this quicker version better than the original. I'm always leery of reunited bands, but this is surprisingly great. Chin chin, boys! (AU)
(Schizophrenic)

**UTOPIA – "Niee" LP**
I've listened to this record a dozen times already—it's a perfectly crafted album (and it listens like a fukkn *album*, instead of a bunch of songs thrown together on a 12") with songs that are filled with guitar hooks, lazily wandering bass-lines and vocal melodies that are instantly addictive. The two comparisons are almost too easy, and I find myself struggling to avoid them…but they are unavoidable. UTOPIA's singer Marta has the same beautiful lilt in her voice as Magali of LA FRACTION, and it has every bit of the power. The Polish language adds the same mysterious quality to my uncultured English-only ears as does Magali's French, and like LA FRACTION, UTOPIA plays simple but near flawless driving hardcore/punk to give that voice a platform. And speaking of driving, Jarek's drums are straightforward and devoid of any unnecessary frills (not unlike Boris from LA FRACTION), and the result is a record where every song makes me just want to fukkn *dance*—it's inescapable. The other comparison might be another cop-out, but Poland's POST REGIMENT provided a blueprint for so much of the punk that has come from that country in the last ten years, and UTOPIA sounds like a slightly more mellowed-out and mature version of the same animal. Songs like "Manifest" are so gloriously simple, and have surely been written countless times before, but UTOPIA makes them sound absolutely essential. This is my favorite record this month by far—fucking great. (WN)
(Trujaca Fala)

**VILE GASH – "Life-Rot" EP**
Rough and tough sounding hardcore tunes from this Columbus, Ohio outfit. The second the needle drops on this sucker you get your feedback, fist-pumping drumming and before you know it you can't get off this fucking ride. Ten tracks of raging hardcore and not a second to catch your breath. Great! (MS)
(Youth Attack)

**VOICE OF ADDICTION – "Re-evolution" CD**
Imagine the bastard hell-child of AGAINST ME! and Top Forty Radio fighting a losing battle to bar-rock (ska) ballads. It's that bad. I hope this clueless Windy City trio can pack houses and break hearts with their charm and good looks, cuz their music sucks. (RM)
(self-released)

**VULTURES UNITED – "Savages" CD**
This is a good record, a surprise considering I'd figured it was a hipster shit band based on the cover art—doods adorned in Native American headdress (complete with war paint on) eating ice cream—and questionable album title. Not the case though. The lyrics are well thought out and poignant; delivering a message of personal and general dissatisfaction with people, institutions and ignorance. Stylistically speaking, the vocal delivery did wear me out with the constant blurts, the lack of variation in tone and the scratchy desperation—made me feel like I was being yelled at for not doing my dishes! The music is a bit more difficult to describe, with a monotonous tone reminiscent of older indie acts that teeter on the edge of and flirt with the agitation of punk. I dunno if I can keep up for a whole full-length, but a good effort. (RM)
(Red Scare)

**WARVICTIMS – "Domedagen" CD**
The D-beat equivalent of UNHOLY GRAVE returns with yet another record. Eh. It's not a bad record per se, it's just not in the least memorable. D-beat by the numbers without enough hooks or enthusiasm to really hold my interest. WARVICTIMS are definitely better as a split-record band, and will continue to be until they slow up on the releases and focus a bit more on the songwriting. (AU)
(Crimes Against Humanity)

**LAURENCE WASSER – "Hoochie Cookie Bunny" EP**
I am not the kind of punk who usually goes out dancing. In fact, it is the last thing I'd like to do. Loud, repetitive beats thumping monotonously away while people writhe under colored, flashing lights is not my type of fun. That is what LAURENCE WASSER is giving me on this record. Somehow it is oddly appealing. It's thrashy and punk-ish electronic beats with some ADAM AND THE ANTS whoops for vocals on side A. Side B gets slightly more experimental, kind of going toward a post-punk thing, but never losing that fast disco beat. It repels me, yet I am fascinated by it. (CK)
(Plastic Spoons)

**WEEKEND WARRIOR – "Se Repite" EP**
The best times doing reviews are when you aren't really paying much attention to which new record you're dropping on the turntable but when the music starts you're stopped in your tracks. Simply put, this shit rocked my world. WEEKEND WARRIOR is onto something here with their mix of straight punk and hardcore. Dual vocalists, one of which could be the singer of HEWHOCORRUPTS, a mix of English and Spanish lyrics and a pissed off anarchist vibe without any crust clichés. Cait from RESIST AND EXIST is on bass. West Coast tour in June. (MH)
(Mass Media)

**WHATEVER BRAINS – "Love Taps" EP**
CLONE DEFECTS meets the TRANZMITORS, or HAWKWIND meets the STATUES, or just bad drugs mixed with good punk. This is all over the place in the most wonderful way—20 different sounding bands in every song, but still all making sense, still holding your attention and still maintaining those all-important hooks. Psych-punk without ever playing off or compromising both genres, never losing its way and keeping the rock a-rocking. Static and space sounds mixed with fist-pumping anthems making this my record of the month. (SD)
(Bull City)

**WHITE WIRES – "Pogo 'Til I Puke Tonight/ Don't Call Me When You're Ill"**
Here are two new songs by three fun-loving Canadian pop-punkers that will hopefully win your heart and have you seeking out their other releases. How do you describe the sound? Well, for those who think too many modern power-pop bands have too much pop and not enough punk, or those who think too many garage bands are overly sloppy and could use a little melody, then this band is for you. Although they don't really sound the same, the THERMALS come to mind as the type of music I'm trying to describe—a sort of poppy and well-crafted garage simplicity. WHITE WIRES are raw, yet sound smooth, and they take inspiration from surf to Rip-Off Records garage punk to '60s beat. Sounds like a winning combination to me. Check it out. (BG)
(Ugly Pop)

**WIDE ANGLES – "DDR" EP**

Four songs of some fairly golden pop blasts. It's not really my cup of tea, but it's rising above the crop of crap I've been reviewing. If you like Midwestern pop-punk like TENEMENT, DILLINGER 4, and THE BROKEDOWNS, you'll probably be into this. (GH)
(Let's Pretend / No Breaks)

**WINSLOW – "No Place for Foxes" CD**

This sounds just like first-LP BLINK 182 with a bit more screaming at times. Keeping an open mind, nothing grabbed me on this. Decent enough musically, this is light on the strong hooks vocally which is needed to bring this popular genre home. (RL)
(Tragic Comedy)

**WITCH HATS – "Wound of a Little Horse" 12"**

Single-sided 12" EP from this Aussie post-punk-informed rock band. I'm not really sure why it ended up at *MRR* for review this month, as it was apparently released in 2006 and the band has had a couple other records come out since then… Anyway, these guys seem to get BIRTHDAY PARTY comparisons a lot—maybe 'cause they're Australian, or maybe 'cause they're Australian and ended up listening to a lot of BIRTHDAY PARTY? Oh well. Five bass- and rhythm-heavy mid-tempo tunes with discordant guitar; the vocalist's delivery sounds a bit like the guy from EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING (oops, another comparison to a popular Australian band). *Wound of a Little Horse* has a couple above-average tracks—"Jock the Untold" and "Stupid Arrangements"—and is growing on me a bit, though I'm not really digging the vocals that much… (CS)
(no contact info)

**YOUNG GOVERNOR – "Bedtime Stories/The Cutter"**

Christ. This starts off sounding like some mainstream early-'80s new wave radio hit—FLOCK OF SEAGULLS, maybe—which I could've gotten down with, had the dude not come in wailing with all the subtlety of a blind-drunk karaoke performance. You know that scene in *Boogie Nights* where Marky Mark's character tries to make a record…? The flip is a faster, more guitar-heavy number, similarly ruined. Usually if I've never heard someone before, I go back and listen to his or her previous releases so I can make a comparison—but in this case, the prospect is too daunting. Sorry folks, you're on your own… (CS)
(Southpaw)

**YOUNG LIVERS – "Of Misery and Toil" LP**

The heavy HOT WATER MUSIC influence was the first thing that struck me when I threw this on my headphones. Now, I must admit, I approached this listening session as a reviewer, not as a fan of the YOUNG LIVERS, and my hasty inclination to peg these Southern rockers as HWM clones may not have been a fair assessment of their second full-length record. Then again, maybe I wasn't too far off the mark; the similarities are there, no doubt, though it's hard for the shadow of such an influential band not to fall on a record with many of the same hallmarks. *Of Misery and Toil* is a melodic and dramatic album, emotional but f-in' rocking; not unlike some of the better Southern-tinged, heartfelt epics in the No Idea catalog. It's inviting in the sense that it is not a paint-by-the-numbers record; it captures a vibe and carries it throughout the entire LP, and is mature enough to allow variation and depth. Pretty cool. In the same breath, I should mention there is a hint of over-thought, pseudo-intellectual mallrat rock lurking somewhere in the shadows of this otherwise impressive outing, but I think that may just be my own personal hang-up with the genre. A major selling point for me was the vocals, which had a mellower BIG BUSINESS delivery, a definite BRAID aspect and a wonderfully calming yet charged sound that really roped me in. From there, things only got better. The super clear production enables the listener to really sink their teeth into each layer of the songs. A fine showing, from the rambling backbone of the drums, the wandering bass lines and the aforementioned vocal power to the dueling guitars and all-over-the-map leads. I see fans of BRAID, LEATHERFACE, D4 and No Idea Records digging this thing all the way to China. (RM)
(No Idea)

**V/A – "Anti-Social Promotions" EP**

Spiky hair and studded denim seem to be the wardrobe of choice for the eight bands that appear on this compilation. Standouts are few and far between but the COMBAT CRISIS song certainly got me pumped, calling to mind an early UNSEEN, and VIOLENT SOCIETY bashed out a similarly GBH/EXPLOITED-influenced cut that is quite a ripper. The remaining bands offer some paint-by-the-numbers street-punk that is better left untouched in this review, aside from the DEAD FERNS, who have a song with lyrics that consist strictly of "*whoooowwaaah-hwaahhhoo* you cunt!" Kinda sums it up. (RM)
(8^ Records)

**V/A – "8^ Records 2010 Sampler" EP**

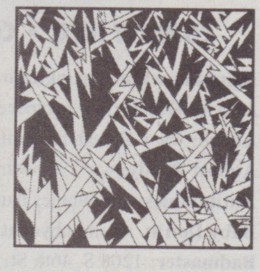
Four-band comp from a non-profit record label out of Missouri. First up is ANGEL FACE, probably my favorite band on the comp. They have a chaotic and discordant raging hardcore sound. The UNPATRIOTICS have a derivative '90s punk sound and have clearly listened to RANCID records. Not my thing at all. A DISCO FOR FERNS does something between street-punk and pop-punk and the vocals don't do it for me. When he sings off-key it makes the whole simple punk song sound like crap. The DEAD PAWNS are another generic punk band with shitty vocals. Reminds me of the first time I ever tried to make music despite not being able to play guitar or sing. Can I take this record off the turntable now? (MH)
(8^ Records)

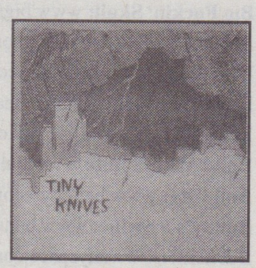
**V/A – "Hey Punk!: DIY Volume 1" CD**

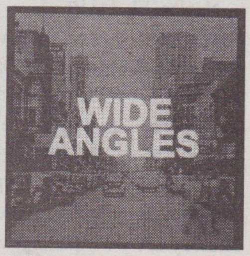
This disc is eloquently (and pretty accurately, no argument there) further subtitled "A Worldwide Punk/HC Compilation." Used to be, back in the day (meaning 25-plus years ago), the likes of me would get really amped up about new compilations. Not only was it a way to sample/be introduced to new music, but they were typically uniformly rather excellent (well, OK, *Bullshit Detector* notwithstanding). The CD era seemed to usher in a plethora of substandard (and frankly awful) compilations... resulting in a state of weary dread (as opposed to excited anticipation) when faced with the new comp. Modern technology, of course, has meant that, soundwise, unless it is deliberate, bands don't actually sound shitty these days. Songwriting has always been a trickier morass to navigate. Which is a long way of saying I was very pleasantly surprised by this compilation. Information on the bands included is scant, to say the least ("check out their MySpace pages"), but it does indeed have 30 bands from around the globe (refreshingly, a large number of them not only have non-English names, but also seem to sing in their native language), playing a variety of styles. And the bar is pretty damn high. I particularly dug the melodic/metallic STRUNG OUT-esque stylings of PASTORATET, and the early MISFITS devotion of WEREWOLF SYNDROME, while SCARLET RADIO has that indie scrappy pop down. VIT GLOGG has the best name, and rock out hard, too. The kind of compilation even this jaded elderly punk hanging out at the back can fully endorse. (RK)
(Hey Punk)

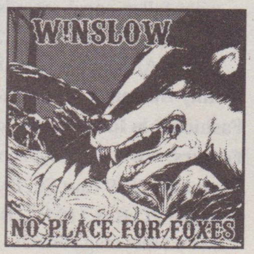
**V/A – "Keep Charging" CD**

A sampler from Fallen Angel Records featuring two songs each from seven bands that have full-length releases. Ranging from greaser punk to old-school punk to pop-punk. I'm not real big on samplers. This is included with any purchase from this label. (RL)
(Fallen Angel)







## CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO • CONTACT INFO

**Agipunk:** www.agipunk.com
**Ajax vs Hector:** www.myspace.comajaxversushector
**Alien8:** www.alienaterecordings.com
**Almost Ready:** www.almostreadyrecords.com
**Antibubbles:** antibubbles.bandcamp.com
**Baby Don't:** www.babydont.blogspot.com
**Badmaster:** 1208 S. 46th St, Philly, PA 19143
**Beer City:** www.beercityrecords.com
**Big Fuckin' Skull:** www.bigfuckinskull.net
**Big Neck:** www.bigneckrecords.com
**Brat Pack:** www.myspace.com/nonbelieversmusic
**Break Through:** winters_heart100@hotmail.com
**Bridge Nine:** www.bridge9.com
**Build Me a Bomb:** www.buildmeabomb.com
**Bull City:** www.bullcityrecords.com
**Bunny's a Swine:** www.bunnysaswine.net
**Burnside:** www.myspace.com/burnsiderecords
**Caesar Cuts:** caesarcuts.blogspot.com
**Captcha:** www.hbsp-2x.com
**CMGR:** PO Box 72031, Oakland, CA 94612, www.hammerlock.us
**Columbus Discount:** www. columbusdiscountrecords.com
**Crimes Against Humanity:** PO Box 1421, Eau Claire, WI 54702, www.cahrecords.com
**Criminal IQ:** www.criminaliq.com
**Crypt:** Julius-Leber Strasse 20, 22765 Hamburg, GERMANY, www.cryptrecords.com
**Culture Kids:** www.myspace.com/culturekidss
**Czerwonu Diabelek:** www.redevilrec.com
**Dancing on Sharks:** myspace.com/dancingonsharks
**Dem Bones:** www.myspace.com/brokenbonesukhc
**Deranged:** 2700 Lower Road, Roberts Creek, BC, V0N 2W4 CANADA, www.derangedrecords.com
**Digital Warfare:** www.digitalwarfarerecords.com
**Dirtnap:** 2615 SE Clinton St, Portland, OR 97202, www.dirtnaprecs.com
**Document Four:** deathagoniesscreams@gmail.com
**Douchemaster:** douchemasterrecords.blogspot.com
**Dr. Strange:** www.drstrange.com
**Drugged Conscience:** 5140 Tamarind Ridge Drive, Naples, FL 34119
**Drunk With Power:** punkwithpower@yahoo.com
**Dusty Medical:** PO Box 1981, Milwaukee, WI 53201, www.dustymedical.com
**8^ Records:** www.myspace.com/8records
**Emancy Punx:** PO Box 145, 02-792 Warszawa, POLAND, www.emancypunx.com
**Euthanasie:** euthanasie.records.free.fr
**Factory 25:** www.factorytwentyfive.com
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**Ride the Snake:** www.ridethesnakerecords.com
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**625 Thrash:** www.625thrash.com
**Sjakk Matt:** Postboks 49, Valerenga 0626 Oslo, NORWAY
**Slumberland:** PO Box 19029, Oakland, CA 94619, www.slumberlandrecords.com
**Solo Para Punks:** Apdo. 1030 Getafe, 28905 Madrid, SPAIN
**Sonic Jett:** 4926 E Burnside St, Portland, OR 97215
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**Stankhouse:** www.stankhouserecords.com
**Stress Domain:** stressdomainrecords.netii.net/shop
**Taang:** 3830 5th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92103, www.taang.com
**Thread Pull:** PO Box 4061, Austin, TX 78751, threadpullrecords@gmail.com
**Tic Tac Totally:** PO Box 558383, Chicago, IL 60655, www.tictactotally.com
**To Live a Lie:** www.tolivealie.com
**Traffic Street:** 1114 F Street NE #308, Washington, DC 20002
**Tragic Comedy:** myspace.com/tragiccomedyrecords
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**Ugly Pop:** 45adapter@gmail.com
**Underestimated:** myspace.com/underestimatedrecords
**Underground Gov't:** undergroundgovernment.com
**Urban Decay:** www.myspace.com/urbandecayrecs
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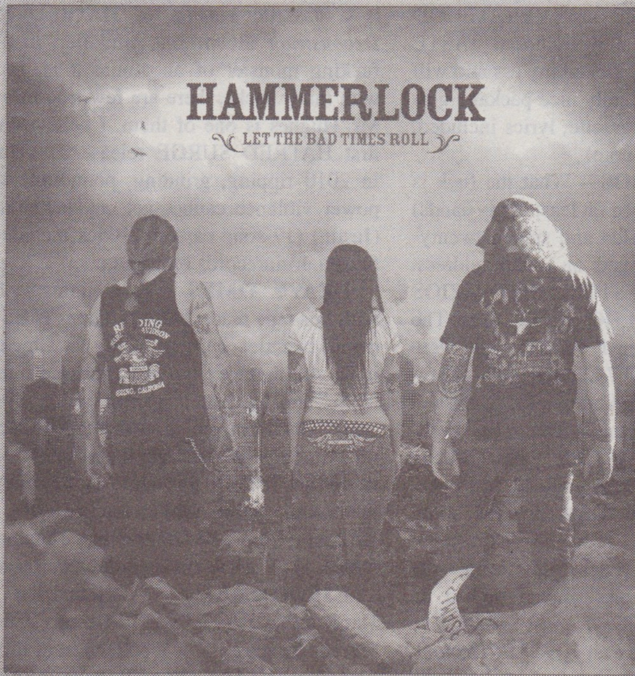


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# DEMOS

Send demos and CD-Rs to: MRR attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Justin Briggs, Robert Collins, TrAsh and XYosefX.

**AMENACA** – To any regular reader of *MRR*, it's no secret that we love the current crop of Spanish hardcore punk bands. Well, here's another one to add to the list. The songs here are urgent blasts of classic sounding punk hardcore that would not seem out of place on the *P.E.A.C.E.* comp. It's loose, it's angry, and it sounds real and honest. I love when a band lacks any sort of pretense and can accurately portray what makes classic punk just that. (Justin) (13-song cassette, lyrics included, hardcorenomoda@gmail.com)

**BASTARD SON OF YOUR MOM** – Skate, Thrash, Destroy – With song titles like "Rollerblade Fag," "Skate Edge" and "Coffee Can Suck It," the best part was when it ended and AC/DC's "Razors Edge" came on (yay re-used tapes!) Thrash with cookie monster vocals. Coventry, England. (trAsh) (15 song cassette, no lyrics, www.myspace.com/adultcrashrecordsvictoria)

**BRAINWAVES** – A cool one here from this Melbourne, Australia unit. BRAINWAVES has an angular, jerky, arty take on this punk thing. Think more BAGS and less DELTA 5 in the art department. I'm getting a big L.A.-before-the-HB's-fucked-it-up-for-all-the-nerds here. Really simple tunes that need no fancy-schmancy tinkering or acrobatics to get the point across. (Justin) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, www.myspace.com/brainwavespunk)

**CRIATURAS** – This cassette is pure unabashed sonic perfection and we've been blasting this thing around my house for weeks now, non-stop. On first listen the first thing that caught me off guard was the guitar. It's tone is crazy and flanged-or-something throughout, which in itself sounds crazy enough, but the leads and hidden little tickles that are thrown into the spaces between the riffs, are fucking mind blowing and are what really catapult this from being a great demo with great songs, into its own fucking orbit of great cosmic importance in my world. There is this real subtle melody in the last song, "Hay Viene la Muerte," that makes me psyched to geek out on this kind of shit every goddamned time I hear it. It's not really just the guitar that's brilliant either, everything here is great, from every word of Dru's amazing vocals, to every drum hit. It's punk, it's hardcore, and it sounds like nothing else out there. CRIATURAS hails from Austin, TX, and some of them have been in other bands you know and probably like but it doesn't matter cause this shit is head and shoulders above almost every other release that will come out in 2010, and that's a promise. A flawless example of everything I love about music. Period. (Justin) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, www.myspace.com/criaturasalpoder)

**DEAN DIRG** – DEAN DIRG are one of those bands whose name I've been hearing for what seems like forever (but is more probably two or three years) but I've somehow never managed to actually hear. This tape, conveniently titled *The Tape*, fixes that. Side A features twenty tracks taken from this German band's EPs, while the flipside features a live set from a Massachusetts show in 2008. Pretty rockin' punk here, emphasis on the rock. This is a pretty even mix of fast early '80s punk with mid '60s garage rock stylings. The songs are short and to the point, but it's a little too bouncy for my tastes. This is definitely a good place to start for anyone wanting to check these guys out. (xYosefx) (20+-song cassette, no lyrics included, Feral Kid Records, 379 Ontario St., Buffalo, NY 14207, feralkidrecords.com)

**DISCIPLES OF CHRIST** – Despite sharing a name with dozens of gospel and Christian rock groups, Washington D.C.'s DISCIPLES OF CHRIST play some fucking unholy hardcore. Alternating between fast-as-LARM grinding hardcore and slow-and-dirty-as-EYEHATEGOD sludge and ending with a well-chosen TASTE OF FEAR cover, this tape kicked my ass and will probably kick your too. Really nice packaging as well. (xYosefx) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, venomousideas@hotmail.com)

**ESTOMAGOS VAZIOS** – What the fuck is this?! This CD demo arrived (at least in my hands) with a big photo of studded and spiked twenty-somethings, song titles, and an email address. That's all I know about ESTOMAGOS VAZIOS other than they do an OLHO SECO cover. The twenty-two tunes contained on this disk were apparently recorded in 1997 and have that nasty-yet-bouncy sound that you find in a lot of classic-era Brazilian and other South American bands. Basically, this fucking rules! It's super raw and fucking punk. Sniff glue and pogo til you puke. (Justin) (22-song CD, no lyrics included, maxcimex@hotmail.co.uk)

**FLESHTEMPLE** – Fuck, this is a tape I've been waiting for. Ever since I picked up FLESHTEMPLE's debut 7" last year I've wanted to hear more. This tape, *Sexual Deviant*, definitely delivers exactly what I wanted to hear. Hailing from New Jersey, these guys take some obvious influences from home-state heroes like RORSCHACH and DEADGUY, playing the same sort of discordant metal-fed hardcore that sounds like very little other than itself. Just add some early '90s black metal to the mix and you've pretty much nailed their sound. Although that sounds like a recipe for absolute garbage, this is really, really good shit here. The lyrics are much more metal than punk, too, with hymns to Satan, Baphomet and Cthulhu abounding. And just in case you were worried that they might be straight edge, they include a song titled "Stairway to Resin." Unfortunately for you, this was limited to one hundred copies, fifty each for the release show and for pre-order, and it's totally sold out. Bummer, (xYosefx) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, Ride the Fury Records, ridethefury.bigcartel.com)

**GENETIC ANGRY** – Blue – The first of three bands from Shred City Records out of Mike's bedroom in Victoria, B.C. Noisy, shreddy, thrashy, metally, midtempo...hardcore? All kind of wanky breakdowns and some downright jammy moments. Almost all unreleased material, they have a 7" out also. Sounds like bored, angry boys who hate everyone from Truro, Nova Scotia. (trAsh) (10 song cassette, no lyrics, myspace.com/adultcrashrecordsvictoria)

**HATRED SURGE** – "Deconstruct" – This is a cassette version of HATRED SURGE's *Deconstruct* album on Painkiller, and what a fucking monster of an album it is. In a genre with many Jacks, there are few true masters, and Mr. Hughes is one of them. I believe this is the first HATRED SURGE release as a full band. In 2010 ripping, grinding, pounding, thrashing, power violence cannot get any better than this. (Justin) (17-song cassette, lyrics included, www.financialruinrecords.blogspot.com)

**HEAVY TIMES** – Fast Nights – The note with this tape reads: "Heavy Times is Bo Hansen, a mid-twenties burnout living in Chicago. This is his 4th tape. He has been making music since 2006." Fuzzy, low-fi garage punk. Super fun! Song "Good Looker" is awesome with lots of back up woo-oohs (Bo backing up himself). Wanna get stoned and listen to this while taking a night ride to the ocean...yes! (trAsh) (5 song cassette, no lyrics Dinosaur Club 810 Grant Street Kalamazoo, MI 49008-1115. www.dinosaurclubrecords.com)

**KIELTOLAKI** – "Totaalisen Tuhon Hardcore" – Fuckin' a… I love this band, it's no secret. This cassette is a collection of this Finnish powerhouse's demo, two EPs, comp stuff, and live tracks. KIELTOLAKI's M.O. is to fucking wreck you with driving, pummeling hardcore and they achieve that with great success. One of the best bands around. (Justin) (32-song cassette, lyrics

included, PO Box 12482, 50780 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA, www.totalmangelrecords.blogspot.com)

**LANDLORDS** – "Wheenchair Night" – This here is a fucker. Literally. LANDLORDS takes a fairly standard non-sloth-y noise rock sound and fuck it, manipulate it, destroy it and rebuild it all in the course of five songs. Defective rotten uneasy listening, it makes sense once its through. It's hard to play and record difficult tunes without riffs and have it still come off a realized piece of art that is conducive to repeat listens, but this lot has found success with that. Quite stellar, if you ask me. (Justin) (5-song cassette, no lyrics included, landlords.band@gmail.com, www.partsunknownrecords.com)

**MAGNUM FORCE** – MOSHTASTIC, heavy as fuck, pro-DIY hardcore. "let people live their lives, they shouldn't live in fear. you just fucking hate them, because they call themselves queer." I wanna party with these dudes! If/when I see them live, I believe I will rip my face off. (trAsh) (6 song cassette with lyrics 422 E. Cornell Dr. Tempe, AZ 85283)

**MURDER-SUICIDE PACT** – Man, I can't believe it's been twelve years since the last MURDER SUICIDE PACT record. This new recording picks up right where these veterans left off, playing hardcore and loving it. There are still hints of a FLAG influence, some occasional '90s-style discord, and Bob's vocals sound super angry as always. Good stuff. (Justin) ($1.50 ppd US/$3 world, 14-song CD, lyrics included, www.myspace.com/mspfl)

**NIGHTBRINGER** – This disk is a recording of this MI/OH band playing live on the "Equalizing Distort" radio show at CIUT radio in Toronto. The tunes are not at all what I had expected, and actually, I'm not sure what I expected either. The NIGHTBRINGER sound is one of unrelenting thrashing power without playing thrash. It's mostly fast, yes but it gets it energy more from the constantly changing melodies inherent in the riffs rather than burying its head and running as fast as it can. I must add that the vocals sound furious as hell but perfectly complement the chiming fast melodies of the guitar. Apparently NIGHBRINGER has two EPs in the works that I will definitely keep my eyes peeled for. (Justin) ($3ppd, 6-song CD, lyrics included, nosleeptildeath.blogspot.com, ruinpact@yahoo.com)

**NINPULATORS** This is actually pretty disappointing, since the awesome cover art made me think I was in for something along the lines of LEFT FOR DEAD or H100S, fast and brutal and obnoxious. That was not to be, as NINPULATORS are a Budapest hardcore band with a sound rooted in the poppier side of '80s hardcore. ADOLESCENTS and DESCENDENTS would be good reference points. This is pretty good, and the lyrics are better than most—or at least the three songs in English are, I can't vouch for the three in Hungarian. "Second handed love always stinks from other people's cum" is a fucking fantastic line that I wish I'd thought of first. A good first effort. (xYosefx) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, ninpulators@gmail.com)

**NO SPECTATORS** – Pissed off hardcore with songs about depression, the recession and life. I love hardcore as therapy...where would so many of us be without it. (trAsh) (4 song cassette with lyrics Mass Media Records PO Box 2692 Mesa, CA 92626)

**PINK NIGHTMARE** – Yay! As soon as I finished listening to this, I rewound the tape and played it again....and again. Gnarly female vocals (all women), great fucking lyrics and I can understand every word! These women bring it with pounding, steady mid-tempo hardcore... YES! I look forward to hearing more... Come out west girls!!! (trAsh) (5 song cassette, lyrics included $4 ppd 91 Edward St. Medford, MA 02115 pinknightmareboston@gmail.com)

**POOR CHOICE** – This one starts of ultra pissed, but soon POOR CHOICE mellow into good and solid Midwestern hardcore. This is CHARLES BRONSON reincarnated without the sarcasm, but with better riffs. Solid shit from a label that seems to enjoy releasing killer tapes, and I happen to like that quality in a label. (Robert) (8 song cassette, lyrics included, myspace.com/frankenjewshows)

**POOR CHOICE** – Sometimes hardcorepunk is a venue for dealing with heavy, relevant sociopolitical issues in a serious manner. Sometimes it's all about having fun, spazzing out and making shitty/awesome music with your friends. POOR CHOICE are pretty much all about the latter. This is simple, fast, fun hardcore without pretensions. The lyrics are pretty basic (fuck cops, don't sell out, jocks suck) and the music is raw and lo-fi. Dan Goetz says these guys kill live, and if anyone knows hardcore it's motherfucking Dan Goetz, so pick this up already. (xYosefx) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, poorchoicehc@yahoo.com, frankenjewrecords.bigcartel.com, myspace.com/getacluerecords)

**PROFESSION: ILL** – Straight ahead BLACK FLAG worship. Going by the lyrics, I'm assuming straight-edge boys. Their song "To Close For Comfort" is so close to BLACK FLAG's "Depression" it made me giggle. St. Johns, Newfoundland (trAsh) (18 song CD, lyrics included, www.myspace.com/adultcrashrecordsvictoria)

**RAD COMPANY** – I reviewed a tape from these Ohio kids a few months back, and now they've returned with a round plastic thing called a CD. Melodic guitars, harmonized backing vox, hooks galore and ready for the opening slot on the new upcoming LAGWAGON/SMOKE OR FIRE package tour... The kids would totally love 'em. Hard working honest melodic punk. (Robert) (5 song CDr, no lyrics, mrgimmick2000@yahoo.com)

**RAINBOW PERSON** – Pained '90s emotional punk (note: this is different from what the kids call "emo") on the vocals, but more on the creepy PAIN TEENS trip than any kind of BRAID nonsense. Noisy chaotic guitars that lean towards similar comparisons and a sparse delivery that gives off the same vibe as KIM PHUC while managing to sound nothing like them (what a reviewer cop out, I know... but it's true!). Mid tempo damaged and plodding art punk with a lo fi demo quality recording... down the line these dudes could go either way, but for now I like it. (Robert) (5 song cassette, no lyrics, rainbowperson@gmail.com)

**THE RATS** – The first song from Sweden's THE RATS kicks in, and I'm wondering if these guys have gotten up the nerve to tell TURBONEGRO that the Swedes have officially eliminated the need for them old Norwegians to bother with their tired rock'n' roll schtick... and then THE RATS start playing fast and I'm in love. It's like TURBONEGRO at their prime covering classic '80s HC. Marbles in the mouth vocals and great fukkn' riffs and I'm really in love. LIFE'S HALT given the modern treatment and made all heavy... this is all high praise, but THE RATS are well worth every fucking word, get this shit now. (Robert) (8 song cassette, lyrics included, myspace.com/666therats666)

**ROCKFIGHT** – Meat and 'taters hardcore punk from the Bay Area. This reminds me of the '90s band THE SICK who were from the same area... kinda melodic and sung vocals that sometimes work and sometimes detract from the power of the music. Pretty much all "GO" tempo, think AVAIL, STRIKE ANYWHERE for more references. (16 song CDr, lyrics included, myspace.com/rockfightsf)

**SALTED EARTH** – This is the shit that I liked in the '90s: hardcore punk that was heartfelt, but not 'emo' per se—these are serious and personal songs about frustration, sexual assault and self image all presented from a woman's point of view, and never do I get the impression that SALTED EARTH are "self righteous" or any of the anti-PC backlash bullshit tags people seem to put on bands who actually stand for something. Rather, SALTED EARTH just actually stand for something, and present themselves honestly. Heavy distorted hardcore that sounds like it comes from the East Bay (it does), but this is far from a throwback to the ECONOCHRIST and FILTH days—there are a lot of the same hooks, but SALTED EARTH slow down often for emphasis and the guitar leads are vaguely stoner rockish, but completely unique. Intense and heartfelt hardcore with a raw demo recording...the record is gonna be fukkn' sick, I have no doubt. (Robert) (5 song cassette, lyrics included, www.saltedearth.org)

**SECRET PEOPLE** – This isn't a demo but rather a promo tape for a 7" coming out this summer. I can't remember if the demo got reviewed here, but it's a goddamn killer and so are the two tracks here. SECRET PEOPLE are one of the best hardcore bands in the Bay Area today. The two songs here should appeal to anyone who loves good old-fashioned hardcore. MINOR THREAT, NEGATIVE FX, PROJECT X, shit like that. Punk rock and hardcore made my life bearable when I was in high school. It didn't make me forget that I was a complete fuckup, it didn't make the jocks fuck with me less or girls like me more, but it made things OK when I played it full blast on the crappy stereo in my bedroom. This is exactly that kind of hardcore. The good shit. (xYosefx) (2-song cassette, no lyrics included, secretpeoplehc.

blogspot.com, ebcrecords.com)

**SERIOUS TRACERS** – Austin Texas garage punks with some serious issues in the focus and continuity department (it's cool, so do I)—shit is all over the place, and it's making my head hurt (it's cool, it might be the beer). Also, the guitar is way out of tune at the start of "Cowboys & Indians" and I bet these dudes get drunk as fuck when they play live. The singer kinda sounds like the dude from INTERPOL when he croons, then like a maniac when he screams... deranged, demented and completely free form rock and roll... allow the song titles to tell the story: "Cocaine Island," "Rock & Roll Fucker" and the brilliant "Your Place." (9 song CDr, no lyrics, myspace.com/serioustracers)

**SHEEEP** [editor: yes, the three "E"s is the correct spelling] – This L.A.-based "psychedelic thrash" band moves fluidly from doom to hardcore to psych rock and back. They even throw in some beautiful acoustic guitar parts. They can do this in the course of one song and it sounds fucking great. It's rare that I find music that defies categorization like this without coming across as arty bullshit. SHEEEP are one of the best new bands I've discovered in the last year, and they just keep getting better. Buy this tape. (xYosefx) (8-song cassette, no lyrics included, myspace.com/sheeeeeeeeeep, givepraiserecords.com)

**SHIT STREET** – Street punk from Finland. The vocalist has that gruff but still vaguely tuneful quality that tends to make basic street punk more appealing that it actually is (but shit man, if you like it, the who cares why, right?), and kinda reminds me of early BAD RELIGION or SOCIAL DISTORTION while the raw recording makes me want to bust out my early Deutsch Punk records. Really, they are called SHIT STREET, so how can you possibly lose? Oh wait... if you close your demo with a song called "Sexual Predator," please include lyrics, especially when it follows one called "I Like Your Ass." (Robert) (9 song CDr, no lyrics, punajuurisalaatti@hotmail.com)

**SLAKTRENS** – No fi guitar/drum garage grind from Sweden. Killer tunes and a ripping drummer—give these dudes a proper recording and look out! (Robert) (10 song CDr, lyrics included, slaktrens@gmail.com)

**SLEEPIES** – Killer poppy punk with a distinct East Bay feel, but I can still hear the hip streets of Brooklyn in their songs. As a demo, this shit suits me perfectly, though I can easily imagine them cleaning up a little too nice for my personal taste... but I imagine I would still grudgingly admit (in private) that their songs were super killer. This is that band at the hipster show that you not only like, but it fucking figures that at the end of the night they are the only people in the room that you feel like drinking with, and so you drink with them. (Robert) (7 song CDr, lyrics included, 112 George St. #2, Brooklyn, NY 11237)

**SOCIALLY RETARDED** – Seriously angry hardcore from the Midwest. Harsh and half screeched vocals (the kind of screeched that comes from necessity, not necessarily by design) make this shit sound even more intense. The songs are heavy as shit and totally urgent, they just kind of fall into one another. Chalk this one up there with GRAVEBOUND in the "Hardcore Of The Month" club. Shit kills, and I suggest you get into it... like today. (Robert) (10 song cassette, lyrics included, myspace.com/sociallyretardedchc)

**SONGS FOR SNAKES** – Alt rock stuff that reminds me of PSYCHEDELIC FURS. This borders on non-reviewable, but *MRR* readers who dig infectious but professional rock will be very pleased, and the third song's chorus sounds kinda like THE ALARM mixed with JAWBREAKER. I like THE ALARM and JAWBREAKER both, so this is a winner for me. (Robert) (5 song CDr, no lyrics, 18A Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114,

**THEY CAME AT DAWN** – Crushingly epic doom/crust from the woods of Northern California. The slow parts ooze KYLESA, especially in the guitars (someone has done their Philip Cope homework, and it shows) and the faster parts are high quality dark and anguished crust with little black metal overtones to keep me interested. Loads of bands try to do this shit, but THEY CAME AT DAWN pull it off, and I'm stoked to hear more. Really really good. (Robert) (3 song CDr, no lyrics, PO Box 5175, Arcata, CA 95518, myspace.com/theycameatdawn)

**TIJUANA BIBLE** – It's like SUBMACHINE reincarnated themselves as SXE youngsters in Salt Lake City. There's a metal dude wanking occasionally on the guitar and he rules, while the singer seems really frustrated and pretty pissed about shit... comes with a zine and loads of photos. Recommended for fans of both kinds: punk and hardcore. (Robert) (9 song cassette, lyrics included, $5ppd from tijuanabiblehardcore@gmail.com)

**TOTAL RECALL** – These young Finns play good hardcore with obvious influences, from the early '80s through the youth crew. Three songs about skating, one that I think is anti-Nazi (lyrics in Finnish on that and one other), one about scenesters, pretty standard fare. The best song on here is a CONFRONT cover, but they manage to mangle it irreparably by changing the title to "One Life BMX Free" and including the incredibly lame lyric "Parkour kids are fucking gay." Don't mess with a classic. (xYosefx) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, unitedshoes@hotmail.com, myspace.com/unitedshoebrothersentertainment, myspace.com/totalrecallsucks)

**TUHKAUS** – Harsh hardcore from Finland with female (or really hyper teenage) vocals and out of place, but strangley awesome guitar solos. TUHKAUS dip occasionally into Dbeat crust, but always seem to switch back to straight forward hardcore punk - they are good at both, but the slower paced stuff seems to suit them better. This shit is full throttle and leaves nothing to the imagination... two songs in you know exactly what you are getting. (Robert) (16 song CDr, no lyrics, myspace.com/tuhkaus)

**UNION X** – Two demos this month from UNION X, I'll review them together because all of the songs on one are also included on the other... seems logical, right? Stripped down pogo punk from the UK, like EXPLOITED at their first rehearsal. Vaguely tuneful sing along vocals and very basic songs, but I remain intrigued because the bass player looks to be even older than I am, and the dude is still killing it. Also, the first song is called "Tithead," and that makes me chuckle. (Robert) (6 song CDr, lyrics included, unionx08@yahoo.com)

**UNPERSON** - These Bostonians play pretty top-notch crusty hardcore with very in-your-face political lyrics. These are simple, to the point diatribes on colonialism, veganism, "green" capitalism—the kind of lyrics that would make DROPDEAD and AUS ROTTEN proud. The music is mostly on the faster side but sometimes slows to a crawl or comes in jagged stops and starts. The songs are short and the tape was over before I knew it, leaving me wanting more. (xYosefx) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, 1 Fairland St. #3, Boston, MA 02119, unperson.boston@gmail.com)

**V/A – Houston Sampler** – This is a pretty awesome idea... apparently someone dissed the Houston punk scene (or lack thereof) in the pages of *MRR* last month, so these kids whipped up a four band sampler of what the town has to offer. THE WHAT NOTS (female vox, melodic poppy stuff), PUBLIC SAFETY (high energy AVAIL-esque hardcore), NOTHING OF MERIT (snotty raw high attitude punk), RESTLESS FEW (1/2/1/2 raucous shits) are represented, and they are giving the shit away for postage, so get into it... a fine rebuttal! (Robert) (4 song CDr, no lyrics, SASE to: Jeff Schmidt, 4402 Spencer B, Houston, TX 77007)

**V/A – "La Compile #3"** – 17 band French CD comp with mostly melodic punk with a few tinges of mainstream modern "hardcore" thrown in for fun. Bands include: MYSTERY OF 19TH OCTOBER, CULTURE INUTILE, REAL THREAT, MAKO and loads more I had never heard of. This scene seems to listen to a lot of LEFTOVER CRACK, NIRVANA, OPERATION IVY and OFFSPRING...that should get you started. (Robert) (17 song CDr, no lyrics, no contact info)

**THE VAN BUREN BOYS** – Here's some rough and tumble heavy drinkin' punk rock'n'roll from the mean streets of Chicago. Heavy THUNDERS worship and guitar leads nicked from GEORGIA SATELLITES put these fellows right in line with THE RIFFS or some EDDIE & THE HOT RODS loving pre-junkies. Heavy on the pop sensibilities, this is ready for the big time. (Robert) (12 song CDr, no lyrics, www.vanburenrocknroll.com)

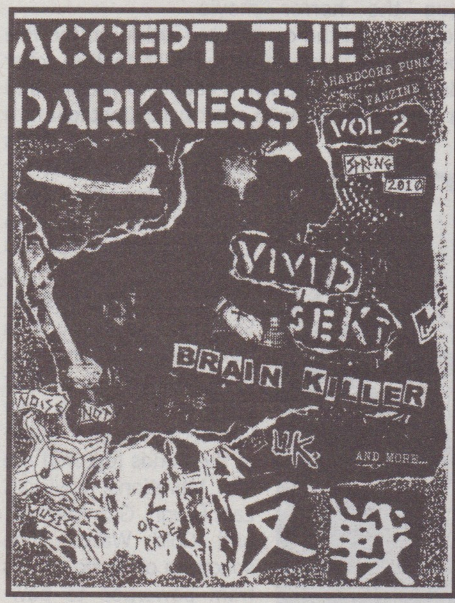
**YOUNG ADULTS** – Echo drenched guitars that to the line between '80s shoegazer and early emotional hardcore... combine that with the equally distant but screaming guitars and there is a definite early '90s DC vibe, but this sounds more like alternative rock. Either way, it's the good kind of alternative rock...remember, JESUS AND MARY CHAIN's first LP got a fine review in these pages some years ago... just sayin'. (Robert) (5 song CDr, no lyrics, myspace.com/youngadultsband)

# ZINES

*Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.*

**Reviews by:**
**(DA) Diane Anastasio**
**(JD) Judy Balmin**
**(MB) Mariam Bastani**
**(JB) Julia Booze**
**(TB) Tim Brooks**
**(LG) Layla Gibbon**
**(BG) Bob Goldie**
**(MM) Marissa Magic**
**(JM) Jeff Mason**
**(CR) Casey Ress**
**(DS) Dionne Stevens**
**(VX) XYosefX**

**ACCEPT THE DARKNESS** #2 / $2 or Trade
8.5 x 6 – copied – 22 Pgs
For all you noise lovers this is your rag. Looking like some kinda Crass leaflet or inside to a Disclose record, Shiva covers all things blown out and distorted. Interviews with Vividsekt and Brainkiller are decent as well as some histories of the Sexual, Asocial and Morbid Humor, which are a little thin, as most of the information is pretty easily available. There is also stuff about East Coast bands and the usual reviews of zines and records. Shiva's enthusiasm shines through each page of this, and I am stoked on how into this genre he is. It was good to find information about bands I hadn't heard of. Hopefully in future issues he will dig a little deeper, looking forward to more!! (TB)
(Shiva/ 61 The Terrace/ Katonah/ NY 10536)




**A.M.** vol. 3 / $10.00
8.5 x 11 – printed – 32 pgs
This is a collection of comix by Vezun from Las Vegas. The zine contains one panel comics and short strips in both color and black and white. The art is definitely informed by graffiti art, in style and use of color (is this guy a B-boy comic artist, perhaps?). There are also some action comics influences in perspective and in drawing style; I see some of Marvels late '70s *The Amazing Spiderman* action movements (Dork? Me? No way...), yet there is a hint of the mystery and darkness of the early '80s comics too, yes, that includes X-Men. The story lines seemed honest, but not all that compelling except for a scant few. The art is a bit inconsistent, but what's good is really good. Once there is a synthesis of the art he is clearly capable of and a honing of his story telling, this will be something great. Lastly, I have to say that $10 is too expensive, seriously. (MB)
Vezun / PO Box 15394 / Las Vegas, NV / 89114-5394
www.vezun.com

**ANARCHY: A JOURNAL OF DESIRE ARMED** #68/69 / $28 for 4 issue sub in US
8.5 x 11 – printed – 98 pgs
This journal provides almost every insight I have into anarchist infighting. Not that these folks are constantly squabbling, but they critique many who are. After the rad/bizarre painted cover, the obituaries, and a piece on surrealism (which I believe entails the right to be goofy), we are treated to a few long-ish book reviews, some going back to '07. Our friends at AK Press get smacked about! This being a double issue, there are plenty of essays and space for graphics. The graphics seem to have nothing to do with the articles, which I like. "Why I Am Not An Anti-primitivist" is well-reasoned, mostly, until the end when the writer points out that, in all likelihood, there won't be enough food for everyone who is currently well (if not over-) fed in the new coercion-free society. Who's gonna bust ass to feed other people when they're not forced to? The ideas of philosopher Max Stirner are investigated, but this material was a little much for my concentration level. I did notice that a number of pages are fucked up, with some repeated and others missing. The letters column features Florence, Colorado's Theodore Kaczynski attacking the motivations of scientists—word. Some of y'all who're into theory study groups and such will be kept busy, but I, as with previous issues, found much of the content here too esoteric. From a music review: "...you can still expect a decidedly Manichean lyrical stance and more than a small hint of the Fall narrative so central to the crust aesthetic." (JM)
PO Box 3448 / Berkeley, CA 94703
www.anarchymag.org

**ANTIPATIA** #6, #7, #8 / $?
5.75 x 8.25 (folded) – printed – 2 pgs
Alright, I know I have raved about zines from Spain and I know that I have said that their content is rich, but nothing compares to the punch that this 2 page fold out Spanish language zine from Barcelona delivers. This zine has mastered the extremely difficult art of the interview. No shit. The interviews and reports in these three volumes include a report about punk in Cuba, a concise history of industry and war as bedfellows and a heads up to good punk from Barcelona (#6), Reports of badass fests and music (punk and otherwise) coming through their radio show www.radiobronka.info/escuchar (#7), Afeite Al Perro, an artist, tape label, zine maker (#8). The interviews and reports seamlessly incorporate, music, culture and political themes. The more I do these reviews, the more it saddens me that more people don't know how to speak Spanish, because this is a zine that would benefit anyone that wants to learn about punks of other cultures in an intelligent and informed way. You guys are really missing out. (MB)
antipatiazine.wordpress.com for ordering info.

**ARTY PARTY** / $3
8.5 x 11 – copied – 23 pgs
I really like this zine, It's basically a bunch of comics making fun of different artists. It's really hilarious but at the same time it's weird because if yr not familiar with the works of the artists in this you probably won't get the jokes. Or maybe it could still be funny? I didn't understand the comics that made fun of artists that I'm not familiar with. Get it? Get it? Which makes it even weirder that in the afterwards it talks about trying to destroy the exclusivity of

the art world by making satirical comics about artists in zine form, but these comics won't make sense if you don't know the artists (a fact that strangely enough they acknowledge in the afterwards too). (MM)
James Payne / 115 W 10th Ave / Columbus, OH 43201

**BROKEN PENCIL #47 / $5.95**
8.5 x 11 – printed – 74 pages
It isn't very punk to talk about paying taxes, but I have no choice here. When I pay mine, I like to tell myself that the money I submit goes to care for the elderly and improve the roads that I drive upon. If able to select where the check goes, art and zine writing programs like Canada's would be excellent choices. I would like to think that a system supporting the underground arts, like Canada, is something that many of us in crux about this stupid subject of compliance and taxation would opt for. Surely the Canadian system of government is shit for other reasons, as all systems undoubtedly are; but for this, it is not. *Broken Pencil* is brought to you through grants given by the government and offers a glimpse into what the product of creativity sans financial insecurity can be-Very positive indeed. (DS)
Broken Pencil / PO Box 20 station P / Toronto, Ontario / M5S2S7 / Canada
www.brokenpencil.com

**CORPORATE ROCK KNOCKOUT** #0 / $?
8.5 x 11 – printed – 72 pgs
What we have here is an offshoot of Ox Fanzine, half German half English, all unapologetic rock enthusiasts.

The editor is a long time contributor for Ox and decided he wanted to be able to run full interviews without space limitations, as well as include his own spin on what music is worth paying attention to these days. The result is a bunch of interviews with mostly garage bands and punk rock, kind of falling out of your chair reviews all drunk and happy and stoked. The cover is sort of glossy and a bit of a turn off for me, it's a cartoon of some stoic punks climbing out of a grave to help shovel dirt over another open grave that is filled with some generic emo LPs and an Avril Lavigne record, a Rolling Stone with Bono on the cover and a smashed TV. Whaaa? I was happy to see an interview with Bay Area sweethearts NoBunny as well as Tina Luchessi. Also featured are the New Bomb Turks, Sedatives, Ghetto Ways, Love Boat, and so on. It kind of reminds me of *Razorcake* in the way that I feel like I am liable to run into someone talking about his own or someone else's dick. But still cool. Apparently comes with a 7" that *MRR* stole before I got to it or they stiffed us on. (JB)
CRKO Fanzine c/o Bernd Fischer / Am Hemberg 40 / 49716 Meppen / GERMANY
crkofanzine@googlemail.com

**DEALIN' WITH IT** #3 / $4
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 32 pgs

The totally cut-and-paste copy shop job punk fanzine is the epitome of what separates "zines" from magazines; practically any dedicated, passionate individual (often enlisting a friend or two) who loves the subculture and wants to contribute something can do so. *Dealin' With It* evokes this feeling as it is largely the creation of a fan who reviews some newly acquired records and creates haphazard collages of photos and fliers from shows around the Halifax area. But there are a few other features in this issue that give it nice variety. I dug the horror movie reviews and the contributed article on the five best punk/hardcore songs that feature killer drums. There are also a couple of recipes and a brief interview with crust band Contagium to round it out. But that's only half the reason for checking out this issue 'cause it also comes with CD compilation of 19 Halifax area bands (38 songs) that *doesn't suck*! Seriously, so many CDs that come with zines are total throwaways but there are quite a few killers on this one. Some of the bands featured are Bad Vibrations, Envision, Last Laugh, Get Wrecked, and Cold Warps. The spectrum of music ranges from powerpop to powerviolence, leaving something for everyone. After hearing these bands and reading this zine I would say the Halifax scene is as strong as ever. (BG)
Ian Langille / 567 S Almon Street / Halifax, N.S. / B3K 1T5 / CANADA /
mosh_n_thrash@hotmail.com

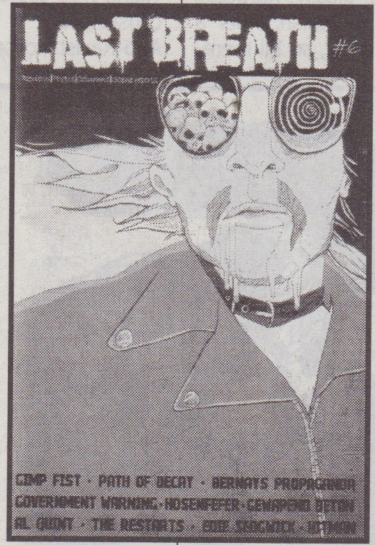
**DWELLING PORTABLY** April 2010
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 16 pgs
This is the sort of zine that would come in handy if you were to decide to prepare for end times by forging a homestead off the grid on some long-forgotten land in the middle of nowhere. It's a zine compiling different people's writings and tips about sustainable living and alternative lifestyles: like how to live in your van and actually make it work, how to live off of foraged plants, and how to deal with animal attacks. It's actually got a ton of pretty interesting information and anecdotes, though a tiny percentage of it seems to actually be practical for city-dwellers like myself. (DA)
DP c/o Lisa Ahne / PO Box 181 / Alsea, OR 97324-0181 /
juliesummerseatssensbly@yahoo.com

**EVIL MINDED** #5 / $5 US or $8 world
8.5 x 11 – copied – 28 pgs
This is a great zine-super raw looking, truly representing the super raw sounds of the bands interviewed and the scenes discussed. The LA Raw Ponx get a section in which Kiwi outlines the achievements of a tight knit and very inspiring scene, based in South Central LA. Most of the bands mentioned have played SF, and I have been blown away every time—she also talks about some newer bands which sound exciting… And about their zine, screen printing workshop, tape label—these punks appetite for community and possibility is exemplified by their great bands and all the things outside of music that they make happen. A record store too? Damn. Anyway, the rest of the content of *Evil Minded* is just as enticing as that scene report. All the interviews are engrossing reads, like conversations rather than dull Q and A sessions, with bands from Aghast to the Assassinators to Sudor, and a retrospective on UBR from Yugoslavia in the '80s. Seriously recommended zine. It looks kind of scrappy/unpolished, not in a intentionally dbeat ass flap GaiConfuse tribute, but in a way that a lot of the zines from the 1980s that *MRR* has in our archive do. I like that… This is a music fanzine, and I would kind of liked it if the editor/writer had written more. His introduction was cool, made me psyched on summer adventures to come… Strongly recommended. (LG)
Tom Mayhugh / 2964 Wintergarden Unit D / Lexington, KY 40517

**FEEDBACK** #7 / $2
5.5 x 7 – copied – 48 pgs
This is the second issue of feedback that I've gotten and I'm always kind of bored by it. It's decent it's just kind of eh. It's basically a review zine in comic form but the drawings aren't that interesting so it just makes for short two sentence blurbs about the bands(blah blah played, they fucking ruled!). In a way I feel like

I'm reading press quotes or something. I mean, I read the whole thing, but eh. In this issue there are also a bunch of movie reviews but I just don't really like the writing very much. (MM)
John Isaacson / 3613 SE 10th ave / Portland, OR 97202

**GROUNDSCORE** #4 / free or trade
8.5 x 11 – copied – 72 pgs
As the title suggests there is some finery mixed with trash if you dare to look. As a contributor supported project, there is a total mix of content here: fiction(?), musings, cool cartoons, rants, a crossword, a stencil design even. It comes with a CDR of tunes, so far my favorite part of the package. I like the idea of this, but it is graphic heavy so it goes by pretty fast. (JB)
www.groundscorezine.com
ground.score@hotmail.com




**LAST BREATH** #6 / no price listed
5.25 x 8.25 – printed – 60 pgs – Serbian/English
These kids use Serbian (I think) for the columns and reviews and English for the interviews. I couldn't decipher any of the former, though it seems that a decent variety of punk and hardcore music is covered, along with two US zines and three Eastern European ones. The interviews start with four short ones with European labels, then move onto to longer talks with bands: Hosenfefer, Path of Decay, Gewapend Beton, Gimp Fist, Bernays Propaganda, Hitman, the Restarts, Government Warning (the most engaging, thanks to the off-the-cuff responses), and internet DJ Al Quint. Most of these bands I've never even heard of, and the interviews in general are decent, though sadly mostly lacking in trashy stories. There is a fair bit of photography throughout, much of which reproduced extremely well. Three pages are devoted to shots of ancient ('79 – '95) Eastern European bands. There are ads as well, I think Poland's Refuse Records is the "biggest" label represented. There's plenty to read here, the delivery is excellent, and the (English) content is a bit above average. (JM)
c/o Nemanja Boskovic / V. Vlahovic D3 1/7 / 19300 Negotin / Serbia
www.myspace.com/lastbreathzine

**MAP OF FOG** #2 / $2ppd
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 28 pgs
There's something unmistakably "adult" about *Map of Fog*, not adult like racy photos but adult like mature. While I love reading zines written by overenthusiastic wild-eyed twenty-something punks, sometimes we older folks need to feel that perhaps being on the wrong side of thirty doesn't preclude us from participating in a world that includes rad music and good zines. *Map of Fog* contains short pieces all of which take place in San Francisco including a tour of art houses in the Sunset, a commentary on Critical Mass and an appreciation for Dungeons and Dragons of which I will not abide. Nicely assembled and complimented by compelling photography this second effort suggests an interesting and readable future of issues. (CR)
Marcos Soriano / PO Box 27252 / San Francisco, CA 94127

**MERMADIA BOMB** #42 / $2
8 x 5 – copied – 44 pgs
Creepy comic about a mermaid lake full of toxins and some lady reporters that get sucked into it. When I first glanced at it I just thought "oh, just some Dame Darcy type thang" but I really enjoyed the story and the pictures are super dark and weirdo. And really, it's a comic about zombie mermaids, how bad can it be? (MM)
Chelsea Lea / 228 E. Clayton / Athens, GA 30601

**MORE NOIZE** #4 / $3 ppd
5.8 x 8.3 [A5] – copied – 32 pgs
I've reviewed all three previous issues of this UK zine, and it continues to show a marked improvement each issue. This is much better put together than previously—while in the other issues pretty much every page was a solid block of text, Tony is finally dividing most pages up into columns, making it much easier to read. The photo reproduction is excellent now as well, and the layout in general has improved in spades. Content-wise he features an interview with Giftgasattack, a tour report from See You In Hell, tons of reviews and a lovely photo spread of resident *MRR* teen heartthrobs Vaccuum. Good shit. The fifth issue should be out as well by the time this review makes it to print. (VX)
More Noize / 31 Woodville Road / E17 7ER / London / United Kingdom
slobodanburgher@gmail.com

**NODE PAJOMO** Spring 2010 / $1 UA, $2 world
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 24 pages
This is the latest update of a running effort to maintain a directory of mail-art projects. Each issue comes with an introduction to mail-art for newbies. Basically, each project in the directory lists a very brief demand some type of picture, postcard, poem, etc. that you should mail them and an address. Sometimes the collected results are exhibited somewhere as a complete art piece. Here's an easy one: "'Tell Me About Your Day' Postcard. 01.11.10. What did you do? Who did you do it with? How was the weather when you did what you did? Where was it done? Postcard in return. Stephnie Trobec, 12A Byron Road, Pendenden Heath, Maidstone, ME14 2HA, UK." Pretty awesome. (JD)
nodepajomo@gmail.com
Node Pajomo / PO Box 2632 / Bellingham, Washington 98227-2632

**PLASTIC BOMB** #70/6.50 Euros / German
8x10 – printed – 80 pgs
Unfortunately I failed German or I'd be able to enjoy this swell zine. Like a Euro *MRR* (with a more streetpunk bent) this always looks great. This issue has a huge piece on punk and homosexuality as well as interviews with Oi Polloi, MDC, Government Warning, Distemper and a bunch more as well as articles on Anarchism, punk history and a bucketload of reviews. Also comes with a CD of 29 songs with a bunch of mostly German bands I have never heard of. I'm sure if you read German you are already well aware of this longstanding zine and already subscribe . (TB)
(www.plastic-bomb.de)

**PUNKER PAGES** #1 / free?
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 40 pgs
What we have here is a UK based punk directory. To have and to hold for your very own, a lengthy list contacts of record labels, distros, zines, online radio shows, radical news sources, manufacturing plants, printers, and so on. An online version is also available, and the print version is updated biannually. Seems like a good idea, although from scanning the pages, it seems to cover maybe 7% of what is actually out there. So if you believe in a project such as this, submit your info and your friends' and take out an ad why don't you. (JB)
www.punkerpages.com

**RAD PARTY** / French
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 132 pgs
This little publication is one of the longest-running zines to come out of the French punk world, making its debut in 1991, with comic-style color drawings of influential punks past and present, and unique scrawled handwriting describing each pictures contents. It's entirely in French, so I can't understand it, but it seems like there are stories included within, possibly describing tours and shows and personal life experiences. This package came with a regular issue and what seems to be a compilation issue that includes

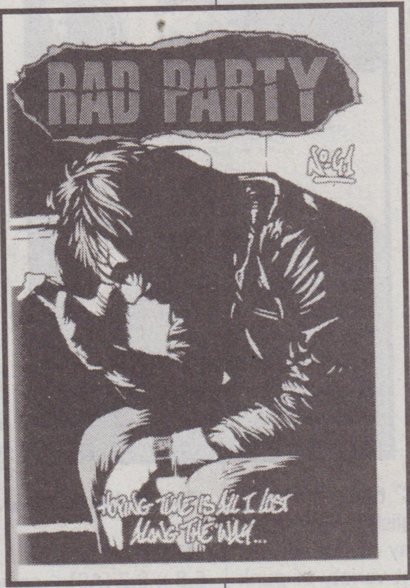
some of the best drawings from over the years. It's definitely a very aesthetically pleasing periodical, but I wish I could understand its content. (DA)
Burninghopes@hotmail.fr
www.radpartyonligne.blogspot.com

**SHADOWPLAY** #27 / 50p SAE or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 12 pages
"Out of the Darkness, and Into the Light" is the theme for this issue. Competent writing and not-too-long stories fill the pages of this zine. Regardless, I feel a familiar indifference (tinged with respect) that I felt whilst reviewing this zine long ago. In the latest issue, I particularly liked "Freedom: Just Another Word," a story about a fucking heinous individual. So as not to spoil the surprise, I will stop there. I wish the interviewer would have stabbed the guy with her pen upon hearing his glib confession, but she kept it cool. For all I know, this could be fiction. The short story to follow made it unclear. Included, is a small, cute zine that is surely good for a smile on the shitter or something. At least there is no mention of football here, as many British zines of this style cannot resist doing. (DS)
Alex Lawson / 28 Warwick Rd / Mapperly Park / Nottingham NG35ES
alexowl26@hotmail.com

**SOCIAL STERILITY** #1 / $?
7 x 8.5 – copied – 16 pgs
I'm holding in my hands a sweet, old-fashioned cut-and-paste punk zine. I definitely don't get enough zines like this to review. Great layout, all white on black with a mix of handwritten and typed text, lots of photos and album art throughout. There are interviews with crust-lords Instinct of Survival and grindcore outfit Pizzahifive, music reviews and a short piece entitled "Passion Before Fashion!" about punk as a way of life. Unfortunately the Instinct of Survival interview is somewhat illegible in part due to overlapping cut-and-pasted text. My only real complaint, though, would be that the interviews could go a bit more in depth rather than just asking about band history, recording details and other generic shit. Overall this is definitely a great first issue. (VX)
Ben/Contagium / 6107 North St. / Halifax, NS / B3K 1P2 / Canada
xcraniumxingesterx@hotmail.com

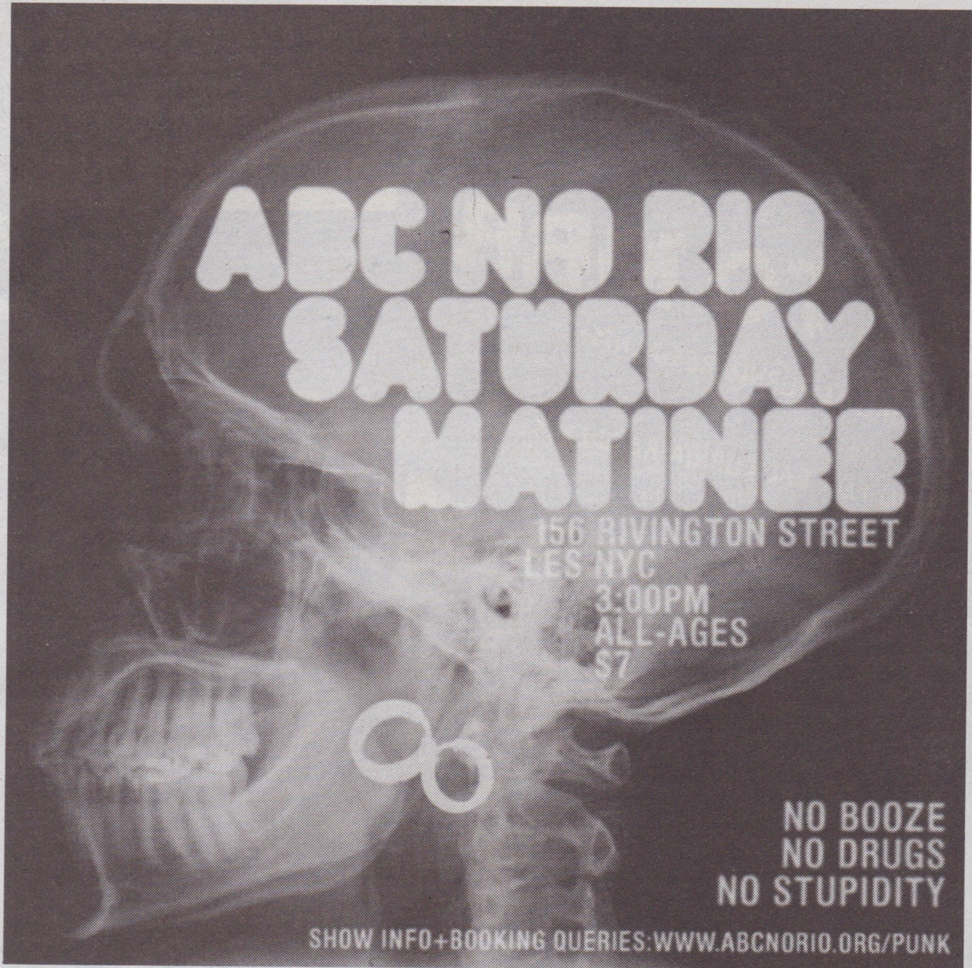
**TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO #224** / contact for price
5.75 x 8.25 - printed - 32 pgs. - Finnish
Another month, another issue of this awesome-looking Finnish zine that I can't read anything but the band names in. This issue features an interview with Horros, a tour report from Diskelma, best of the decade lists from a bunch of folks and the usual assortment of reviews. This is basically a crusty Finnish *MRR*, only smaller and on nicer paper. (VX)
PL 1 / 65200 Vaasa / Finland
tv@punkinfinland.com

**TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO** #225 / 2?
6 x 8.25 – printed – 30 pages
This is a black and white glossy hardcore fanzine from Finland. It's in Finnish. Puts a damper on my ability to review it, so I'll merely describe. One of the first few pages contains a note about the recent passing of long-time *MRR* columnist Bruce Roehrs, which is very touching. There are record reviews for band with familiar names like Integrity and Social Unrest and some foreign ones like Finnish groups Musta köksä and Kyklooppien Sukupuutto. There are also zine reviews and some other unidentifiable content. The cover image is a college of some terrifying pictures of a scientist doing some suspicious activity and cute animals behind bars. (JD)
Toinen Vaihtoehto / PL 1 / 65200 Vaasa / Finland




**TURNING THE TIDE** Vol. 23, #2 / $16 annually (free to prisoners)
17 x 11.5 – printed – 8 pgs
For the few of you who don't know, *Turning the Tide* is a long running newsprint journal that covers activism and issues related to prisoner justice, destructive policies resulting from capitalism, and of most of all, racism. In today's day of rising nationalism and racism, often disguised as populist movements, the fight against it only becomes more imperative. This particular issue had me pleased to read a story about a Chicago anti racist group that beat up some marching nazi skins in broad daylight. Now that's the kind of thing I like to see, since peacefully protesting doesn't seem to accomplish much, especially when hate groups hide behind police protection during their inciting rallies. There are several interesting articles on the ongoing case of eight former SF area Black Panthers who were accused of murdering a police officer in a 1971, Mumia (who also contributes a short piece on the need to end *No Child Left Behind*), white power radio host Hal Turner (accused of threatening federal judges on his website), and a few others. The price of admission might seem a bit steep, but the money for this non-profit goes largely into printing costs and providing free copies to prisoners. Always a good cause. (BG)
Anti-Racist Action / PO Box 1055 / Culver City, CA 90232 /
www.antiracistaction.org

**WELCOME TO FLAVOR COUNTRY** #19&#20 / $1 or stamps
5.5 x 4.5 – copied – 38 pgs
I have to admit when I saw these my heart sunk, dreading the epic life journey perzine drabness that was surely ahead of me... Turns out I was wrong. #19 featured a fascinating look at the author's experiences with evangelical Christianity. It starts out with a piece about the first Iraq war, where he matches his preteen attendance of Sunday school and the doomsday endtimes fear mongering he was absorbing there and elsewhere with specific events of the Gulf war. I also enjoyed reading a set of interviews with people that went to the same evangelical college Kurt did who also lost their faith. Speaking as someone who was loosely raised in the Church of England, but also as someone who didn't ever actually have any faith this made for fascinating reading. This world is so far from my reality, even my understanding of Christianity. It's still strange to me that there are evangelical "educational" institutions that parents willingly send their children to that perpetrate such terrifying and hateful philosophies. Reading this sort of put a human face on these people, courtesy of those who have rejected the monstrous ideas that are bred at such places. Not sure if that makes sense, I mean that rather than just seeming like a monolithic newspaper headline about homophobic Southern Baptists this sort of opened up that world and made the inhabitants seem complex, confused, often misguided but real human beings... The second issue was more introspective, with a similar theme of investigating his Christian upbringing, his relationship with his parents and so forth. The part about the ethnic make up of the neighborhood him and his friends are helping to gentrify was a bit of a downer for this reader... Unexamined privilege is always a bore. (LG)
Kurt Morris / 14 Taft st #3 / Dorchester MA 02125
welcometoflavorcountry@gmail.com



## THE RUMOR:

In pre-punk 1974, there was a legendary proto-punk band from Cleveland, Ohio called **Rocket From The Tombs.** Only lasting a year and issuing no recordings, they spawned the members of what would become **Pere Ubu** and the **Dead Boys.** Imagine what kind of band you'd have if you combined the two into one—That was RFTT!

## THE REALITY:

Some tapes existed and Smog Veil Records issued the best of them in 2002—27 years later—as **"The Day The Earth Met The Rocket From The Tombs."** Not in 1974, not in 2002, did ANYTHING sound like THIS.

## THE RE-EMERGENCE:

Now Rocket From The Tombs are back, with a newly-recorded **vinyl** single, featuring founding members of Pere Ubu, Dead Boys and Television. And today, still, NOTHING sounds like Rocket From The Tombs.

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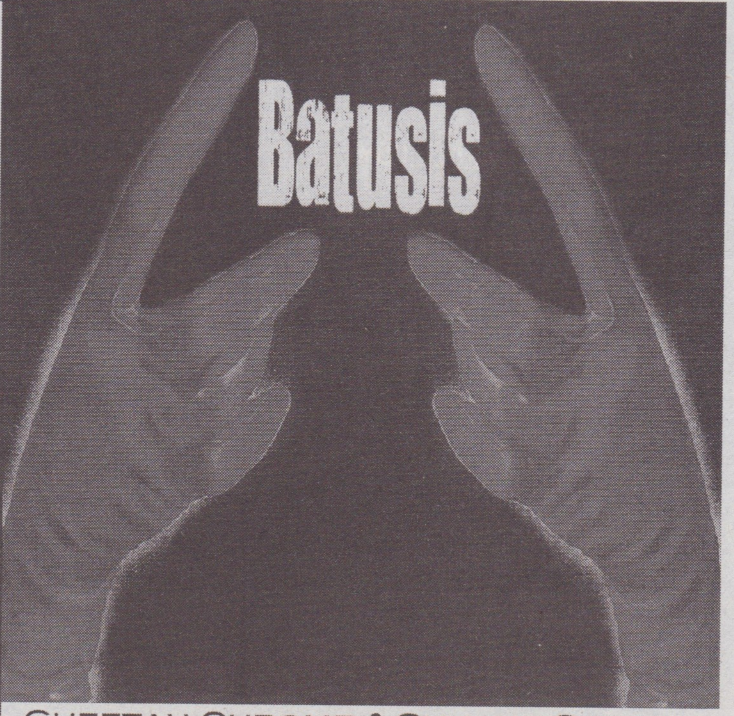


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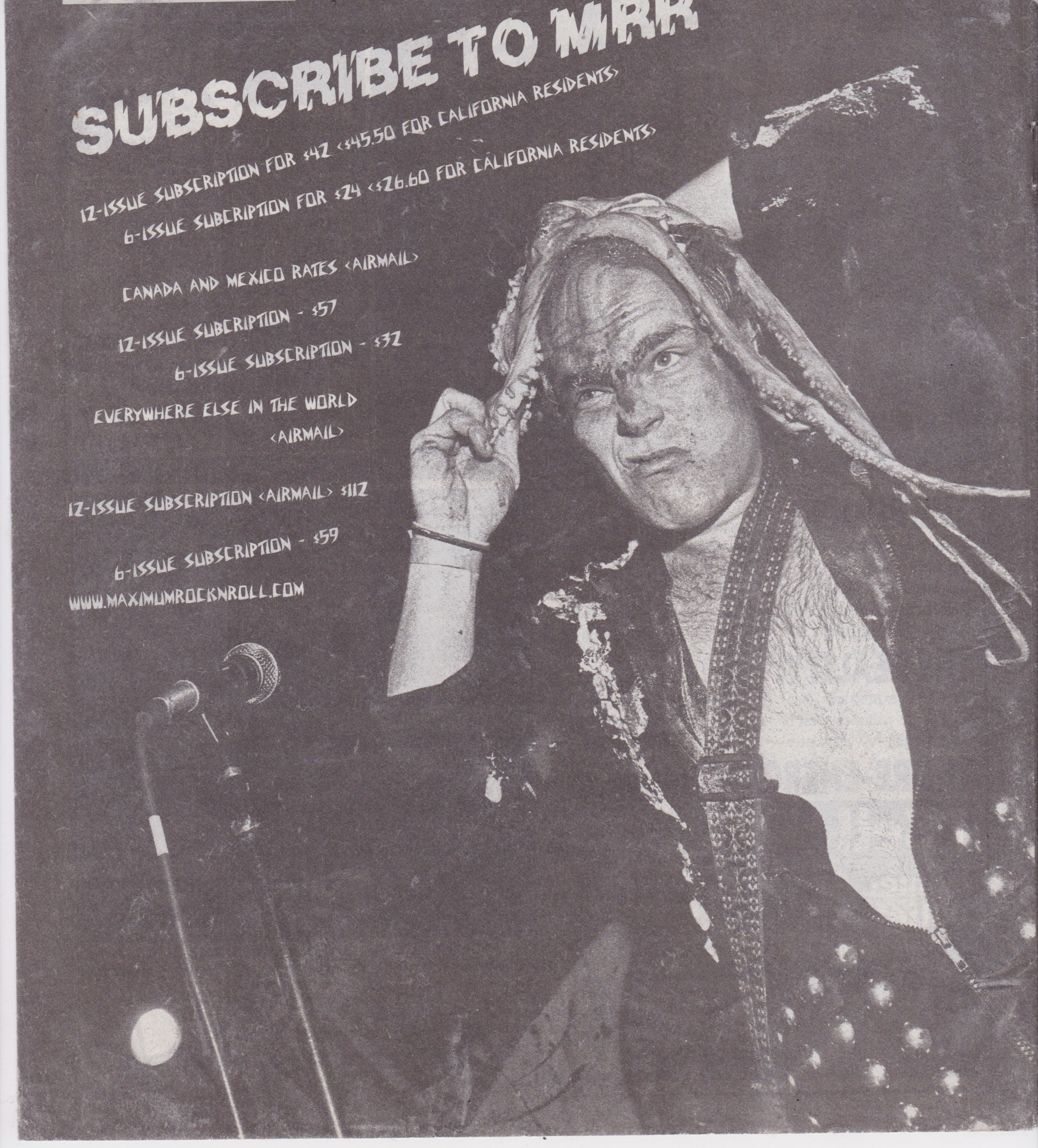
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